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THE NATION

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THE CEASE-FIRE

An Asian Expert Unravels a Byzantine Text and Estimates The Prospects for Peace

O. EDMUND CLUBB

Open Admissions
A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS
Peter Sourian

Sheriff's Crusade
HONGISTO OF SAN FRANCISCO
Tom DeVries

Peron and Opulence
THE MYTHS OF ARGENTINA
Penny Lernoux

SOLZHENITSYN AND THE DEFEATED
Raymond Rosenthal

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LETTERS

hubris

West Upton, Mass.
DEAR SIRS: The article in your January 22nd issue, "The *Hubris* of a President," was stunning in its brilliance. William Shirer has made a remarkable contribution to our further understanding of a President who has dishonored his office and driven so many of us to an even deeper sense of shame and outrage over the wickedness of what we have done in Vietnam. . . . *Arthur B. Jellis*

Elsinore, Calif.
DEAR SIRS: I wish to salute *The Nation* for publishing William L. Shirer's brilliant and courageous essay, "The *Hubris* of a President." He has stated the facts and drawn the proper conclusions. . . . *Morris Kominsky*

taste for Dahlberg

Bloomfield, N.J.
DEAR SIRS: I am sitting in a quiet office as I applaud the wise and perceptive editors of *The Nation*. Puzzled coworkers enter cautiously and ask why. I say because *The Nation* reviewed *The Sorrows of Priapus* by Edward Dahlberg [Jan. 8]. "And who the hell is Edward Dahlberg?" they ask. That is why I am applauding the wise and perceptive editors of *The Nation*. . . .

For those who are nourished by nearly faultless style and take pleasure from craftsmanship which employs dowels, not nails, in putting together our language, including the archaic, Dahlberg has value beyond reckoning.

No one can deny that he often overstates his criticism and, as your reviewer, Gilbert Sorrentino, correctly notes, he cannot resist a well-made sentence even if it weakens his meaning. But if Dahlberg suits you, his little shortcomings are not worth mentioning. *Ben Martorama*

that Democratic 'majority'

Westchester, Ill.
DEAR SIRS: Irving Louis Horowitz's article, "Coalition for a Democratic Majority" [*The Nation*, Jan. 15] underestimates the threat. . . . Mr. Horowitz describes CDM as "an attempt to shape the party structure and political choice for a Democratic candidate in 1976." In the concluding paragraph he wonders if CDM's launching "is not premature by three years at least. . . ."

CDM's goal is not 1976 but 1974. . . . CDM will certainly lobby with party commissions mandated to establish procedure for the 1974 and 1976 conventions and platforms. At stake is the creation of a Democratic Party organization . . . and attempts to keep the party open to increased citizen participation. The Coalition for a Democratic Majority seeks to turn the clock back. . . . *Tom Kramer*

Christmas spirit

Oneonta, N.Y.
DEAR SIRS: I did not read the editorial "In the Spirit" [*The Nation*, Jan. 8] until a day or two ago. The editorial writer may be gratified to know that his last suggestion had already been enacted for Christmas, 1972. I sent Nixon and Kissinger both anti-war cards and enclosed a pamphlet, "Ten Minutes for Peace," distributed by the Institute for International Order. Copies of the pamphlet also went to several White House confidants. . . . *W. F. Roberts*

contributions solicited

DEAR SIRS: For a special issue devoted to Chinua Achebe and Wilson Harris, we solicit contributions on their work as well as on related themes. *David Ray, editor*
New Letters, *University of Missouri*
Kansas City, Mo.

EDITORIALS

Nixon's Budget Politics

On its face, the new Nixon budget has disastrous implications. It sounded taps for what was left of Great Society programs—for example, OEO will be abolished—even as taps were being sounded for Lyndon Johnson. More than 115 programs will be axed. One item alone will illustrate the new look: 23 million Medicare beneficiaries will be required to pay almost $1 billion a year extra in out-of-pocket expenses for medical and hospital care. The big cities have been treated as a pinch-penny uncle might treat a prodigal nephew. Rep. Barbara Jordan (D., Tex.) sums up the implications, fairly and accurately, by saying that the budget reflects "an incredible and callous indifference to the real human needs of the people." The counterpart of "cease-fire" in Vietnam is "slash budgets" for domestic social needs. The President, of course, is a sly prankster: to make his opposition feel a little better, he proposes to eliminate the Subversive Activities Control Board at a massive saving of exactly $357,000. Thank you, Mr. President!

But observe what has happened to the "peace dividend" which was so widely discussed four years ago. Economists and officials casually inform us that the "peace dividend" has been "discounted"; that is, we have already received the dividend—in case you hadn't heard—in the form of a reduction in some items of military spending. But that is carrying a bad joke too far. All that has happened is that the Defense Department has spent more for some items and less for others, with the net result that the military budget for 1974 will be $81.1 billion, up from $76.4 billion for this year, and will climb, by current projections, to $83.5 billion in 1975. Try to find a "dividend," discounted or otherwise, in those figures. The fact is that there never was a dividend, paid or accrued; just heavier military spending. The Pentagon is so "programmed" as to preclude the possibility of significant overall reductions in military spending. "The savings resulting from the cease-fire will be used," reports *The Wall Street Journal*, "to replenish depleted war stocks, modernize weapons systems, increase military pay, and get the remaining GIs home." Trident submarines cost $1 billion each—approximately the cost of an aircraft carrier—and we must have more Tridents, immediately.

Not only is the "peace dividend" a fantasy but we face a sharp cut in all social programs and the prospect of more inflation and higher taxes. For all its brutal slashing, the Nixon budget is the highest ever, $268.7 billion, with no new initiatives and no new programs. Moreover, this total reflects some fancy juggling of figures; the actual budget is even higher, so that the projected $12.7 billion deficit is considerably understated. And all this at a time when we are confronted with a $6 billion trade deficit! As might be expected, manpower and Job Corps programs are being cut, despite the fact that joblessness seems to be rising. Nonchalant reporters assure us that the cutbacks in some items of defense spending will create no *national* problems, but the fine print—as reflected in numerous recent studies—indi-

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cates that some seventy-one communities will face serious problems of adjustment. Nor should one forget that these budget cuts were not foreshadowed by Mr. Nixon in the 1972 campaign; they represent, we are to assume, his post-election reflections on the state of the economy. The fact that what he has done was predictable—as *The Nation* among other publications pointed out last year—does not minimize the deception practiced on a gullible electorate.

But the President, as usual, has a clever political strategy in mind. He has seized the initiative and, by slashing civilian programs across the board, will force Congress to restore or attempt to restore the cuts he has proposed. In the absence of a broad coalition of affected groups allied with a lobby of mayors of the big cities—and the prospects for such a "united front" are not bright—the President will force Congress to fight him program by program on a piecemeal basis. Behind each program that he proposes to demolish is a constituency, but they do not share objectives; each constituency is primarily concerned with its special needs. Some affected groups will applaud the elimination of some programs, and it will be extremely difficult to rally effective political opposition to the budget cuts. But there is even more than that to the President's strategy. Congress will probably succeed in restoring some cuts and the President no doubt assumes that this will happen. But he will then blame Congress for not keeping the lid on spending and demand that it find the money. He has put the legislators on notice: if they do not accept his recommendations, then their only course will be to enact new taxes. "I am not going to propose any."

It would be a grievous miscalculation, however, to dismiss all this as "budget politics" of the kind with which we have become all too familiar. The President's tactics are destroying the basis for the cooperation between executive and legislature that is an indispensable premise of constitutional government. He has defined the decision-making process in such a way as to leave Congress with the alternative of knuckling under to his dictates or of fighting him on his terms. If A and B must cooperate to avoid chaos, then A must not confront B with massive *faits accomplis* and say, in effect, take them or dump them.

Moreover, the President holds most of the trump cards; he can veto bills and he can impound funds. Testifying before Senator Ervin's subcommittee, Hubert H. Humphrey accurately defined the real threat implicit in the presentation of this cynical budget. Senator Humphrey is properly alarmed by "the growing and pervasive Presidential establishment of 'supercrats,' advisers, management experts, budget review officers, special counsels, assistants, and aides to the President, who view Congress not as a partner in the process of government, but as a special-interest group which must plead for the right to exercise its constitutional power." But it is easier to diagram the President's strategy than to counter it. Congress, as Senator McGovern told an Oxford University audience recently, has been exhausted by executive encroachment and legislative paralysis. Can it now muster the resources, the energy, and the unity needed to meet the President's challenge?

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Pretending Reform

There was some hope among members of the House of Representatives that substantial reform would result from the long-awaited caucus of 241 Democrats held on January 22-23. A modification of seniority, a further reduction of Congressional secrecy, and a diminution in the powers of the chairmen of the twenty-one standing committees were hoped for by Congressmen and by the increasing number of outside organizations like Common Cause which have concentrated on procedural reform within the Congress. News about the events of the House caucus was practically lost in the press because of the torrent of news about President Johnson's death on January 22 and President Nixon's statement about the war on January 23.

The Democratic Caucus, for the first time since at least 1910, gave its members the right to vote yes or no on all twenty-one chairmen, who had been nominated by the Committee on Committees solely on the basis of seniority. A secret vote, allowed if 20 per cent of the members present stood up, was insisted upon by Rep. Phillip Burton of California, the chairman of the Democratic Study Group. This practically automatic procedure, hailed by many as a minor revolution, failed to unseat a single chairman and gave eleven of them an overwhelming mandate, with less than ten votes against them.

The highest number of votes (218 out of 241) was cast after Rep. Benjamin Rosenthal of New York urged in a brief sent to all members and on the floor of the House that Rep. Chet Holifield of California not be renominated chairman of the Committee on Government Operations. Holifield won 172 to 46, but Congressman Rosenthal will be remembered by me and many others for the sheer courage with which he undertook the painful task of pointing out the deficiencies in the leadership of Mr. Holifield. The number of votes cast against the chairman of Government Operations was slightly below the forty-nine votes cast against the chairman of the House Internal Security Committee, Richard Ichord, and the forty-eight votes to unseat Rep. W. R. Poage of Texas, the chairman of Agriculture. The votes to unseat Mr. Holifield were slightly higher than the forty-one votes cast against the chairman of Armed Services Committee, Rep. F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana, and the forty votes to unseat Wright Patman of Banking and Currency.

The impact of the twenty-one votes conducted by the Democratic Caucus is uncertain. Some progressives hailed it initially as a landmark, but on reflection came to realize that it's pretty difficult to have much of an election between someone and no one. Attendance declined spectacularly as the elections proceeded. In the final ballot on Ways and Means only 161 out of 241 remained to vote. The fact that only nine members voted to unseat Wilbur Mills—the most powerful and, in the minds of some, most tyrannical chairman—may mean that the liberals gave up or that the conservatives stayed to make certain that all the senior members received the biggest vote attainable.

The so-called elections carried out by the Democratic Caucus with respect to chairmanships were probably doomed from the beginning. Of the 241 Democratic members, 120 are chairmen of the committees or of subcommittees. The nonchairmen are members who have arrived in the last six or eight years. In effect, the exercise of approving or rejecting a chairman, with no alternative offered, asked the members who were already chairmen to vote against the system by which they had themselves benefited. Similarly, such a process called upon the younger members to strike a blow at a system to which their elders in Congress cling as if its demise would mean the fall of the Republic.

It would be consoling to believe that the Democratic Caucus of January 22-23 was the beginning of major procedural reform in the House. Although there is some evidence to support such an optimistic view, an ironic and perhaps realistic judgment was enunciated by a freshman liberal who said: "A system has now been devised by which I can be denied a chairmanship six or eight years from now!" Such is the distrust of the younger members of the House toward a leadership that has refused to renounce or de-fund the war, has no plans to prevent the continued impoundment of $13 billion by the President, and has no program to bring about tax reform or comprehensive health insurance or a program of foreign aid.

The first meeting of the Democratic Caucus of the 93rd Congress consumed seven hours in an elaborate ritual calculated to tell the world that the House is reforming itself. Actually, the processes were designed to extend and enhance the power of the powerful and to confirm the powerlessness of those who are expected only to sit and wait.

It was the cry across the country of the League of Women Voters, Americans for Democratic Action, the National Committee for an Effective Congress, Ralph Nader and his associates, and similar organizations that shamed the House into a pretense at reform; but no real reform will come unless the same cries and the outrage which produced them intensify. The greatest danger now is that Common Cause and other organizations will engender complacency by telling their constituencies that real reform is under way in the House of Representatives.

ROBERT F. DRINAN
Member of Congress; Third District, Mass.

Angry Judges

Chief U.S. Judge John J. Sirica and Judge William Matthew Byrne, Jr., are conservative federal judges. Judge Sirica presided at the recent Watergate trial in Washington, D.C., and Judge Byrne is presiding at the trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo in Los Angeles. Different issues are involved but an important consideration has emerged in both trials.

Judge Byrne has rapped the prosecution in the Ellsberg case for its delay in delivering material he had requested. At first the prosecution denied knowledge of the existence of such material—studies of the Pentagon Papers that might tend to exculpate the defendants—but, item by item, the reports have been reluctantly divulged. Now a retired Air Force colonel has testified that he saw a Pentagon memorandum to the effect that such studies should be "removed from the files." If true, this would

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suggest that officials of both the Justice and Defense Departments had been attempting to obstruct justice.

During the Watergate trial (a jury quickly convicted the two remaining defendants on all counts), Judge Sirica expressed indignation over the way in which the prosecution carefuly limited the examination of witnesses. Specifically, it took the position that the line of responsibility for the break-in stopped with G. Gordon Liddy, counsel for the Committee to Re-elect the President; it did not extend, by implication, to higher-ups in the committee or in the White House. Yet there was evidence that Liddy had said, the day after the break-in, that he had done something "I promised them I would never do." The prosecution made no attempt to identify "them."

The President's own secretary, Bruce Kehrli, testified that, two days after the break-in, he had gone to the office of the White House consultant E. Howard Hunt, Jr., one of the defendants, and cleaned out all traces of Hunt's occupancy; he even drilled open a safe in which Hunt kept papers. Who told Kehrli to take this most unsecretarial action? Now we are told, as Dwight L. Chapin, the President's appointments secretary leaves the White House, that neither the FBI nor the Justice Department had fully investigated Chapin's ties with Donald H. Segretti, who met twice with Hunt in Florida and California and placed nineteen long-distance calls to him in the period from mid-March to June of last year.

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Judges Byrne and Sirica—honest men trying to discharge their duties fairly and conscientiously—should be angry. It is a pity that the public shows no signs of sharing their anger.

Call That a Service?

Ben Franklin has been dead a long time, but if he were brought back to life and let loose on the U. S. Postal Service, he would not take long to find out what was basically wrong. It calls itself a service—which is what Franklin and later postmasters intended it to be—but a service it is not. It is an organizational hybrid, with all the faults of a badly administered government bureaucracy and a deteriorating "private" corporation trying to make a profit, or at least break even. Whatever is wrong with the technology might in time be remedied, but when, on July 1, 1971, the Post Office was given a mandate to be self-sustaining by 1984, one knew that in 1973 citizens and institutions would be paying more and getting less; and by all indications things will get worse.

Almost every issue of the *Congressional Record* is heavy with complaints about unconscionable delays in delivery of mail, and many Congressmen average twenty-five letters a day from people who have been inconvenienced or suffered actual loss. The Congressmen themselves are victims, and some are conducting investigations of their own.

Sen. Charles Mathias, Jr. (R., Md.) was invited last fall to speak at a luncheon in Baltimore. A healthy man, not necessarily an athlete, can walk from Baltimore to Washington in ten or twelve hours, but this invitation to the Senator took thirteen days, and arrived the day after the luncheon took place. Senators do not like to pass up occasions of that kind, nor to give people the impression that they ignore invitations. Mathias thereupon sent out 200 letters, first class, in plain envelopes, to constituents in Maryland and asked them to notify him when the letters arrived. Twenty-five per cent took only one day; it should have been nearer 100 per cent. Two days was the mean: 62 per cent made it within that time span, which is also the average for letters traversing the same distance in metropolitan New York. Within five days practically all the letters—98 per cent—had been delivered by the celebrated fleet couriers. In one case the transit time that had impelled the Senator to make his survey was nearly equaled: ten days.

Rep. Paul G. Rogers (D., Fla.) was not impressed by Senator Mathias' experience; he cites the case of a first-class letter that took from September 15 to December 15 to make it from Palm Beach to an office across the lake in West Palm Beach's Harvey Building—"about half a mile as the crow flies."

Freak occurrences of this sort may be forgiven; it is the chronic laxity that raises hob with individuals and businesses in their daily affairs. The head of a company in Racine, Wis., remonstrates with the Postmaster General: "While our postal rates have risen over the past three or four years at an astounding rate, the service has degenerated to an all-time low. My concern involves more than personal irritation; it has caused us undue inconvenience, embarrassment and expense in the conduct of our small business operations." In October 1972 the company sent its payroll checks by air mail to Dearborn, Mich. When the envelope did not arrive after five days, the company requested a tracer. The post office replied that a request for a tracer could not be initiated for at least fifteen days. On lost parcel post shipments, postal regulations require a waiting period of thirty days!

The USPS boasts that in 1972 it needed only $1.3 billion in direct appropriations, down from $2.08 billion in 1971. But if a few thousand businesses fail as a result of postal inefficiency, where's the economy?

The postal service was never intended to show a profit or even to be self-sustaining. Well into the 20th century, it was projected as an essential public service, as in Franklin's day. The early American postal service had only the most primitive communications and transportation facilities, but it devoted what it had to the service of the citizenry.

This principle must be restored. Mr. Rogers has asked the Post Office and Civil Service Committee and the General Accounting Office to conduct an in-depth investigation of the USPS—a pertinent and timely initiative. It is to be hoped that the postal increases scheduled to take effect on July 6 will be forestalled, pending the outcome of such an investigation.

Since May 1, 1971, the Post Office has operated a Consumer Affairs Department, U.S. Postal Service, Washington, D.C., to handle complaints. Without impugning the good intentions of this organization, we suggest that the citizen may be better served by providing Representatives and Senators with data on poor postal service. Unless Congress acts, the present deficiencies will continue to plague the country.

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THE CEASE-FIRE

O. EDMUND CLUBB

Mr. Clubb was a U.S. Foreign Service officer from 1929 to 1950, serving in China, Indochina and the Soviet Far East. As a consular representative in Vietnam, in December 1941, he was interned in Hanoi and Haiphong for eight months. After an exchange of diplomatic internees at Mozambique, he returned to China in 1942 to serve in Chungking and Urumchi. He was Consul General at Vladivostok in 1944-46. In the postwar period, he acted in the same capacity at Mukden, Changchun, and from 1947-50, at Peking. Later he returned to Washington as director, Office of Chinese Affairs at the State Department, 1950-52. He is the author of Twentieth Century China *and* China and Russia: The "Great Game" *(both Columbia University Press). On January 30 Mr. Clubb, along with other "old China hands," was honored at a luncheon sponsored by the American Foreign Service Association that reflected Washington's changing attitudes toward China and toward those who, like Mr. Clubb, well and faithfully served American interests in that country.*

—The Editors

President Nixon announced on January 23 that the Paris agreement was "to end the war and bring peace with honor to Vietnam and Southeast Asia." Hanoi's Le Duc Tho, who had negotiated the agreement with Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, looked at the matter from a different angle. "The conclusion of such an agreement," he said, "represents a very big victory for the Vietnamese people." He observed that in South Vietnam there were two administrations, two armies, two "controlled zones" and three "political forces" (presumably counting the so-called neutralists). For his part, Saigon President Nguyen Van Thieu adopted a position related more closely to that of his brother Vietnamese than to that of Mr. Nixon. He said: "The signing of the agreement means the beginning of peace. But it does not mean peace. . . . Another phase will now come and it is going to be a political phase. This political struggle is inevitable."

One thing is evident, and it falls on the credit side of the American ledger. There has been separation of the military and political questions, so that the United States, if it chooses to abide by the agreement it has signed, can extricate itself from the war. Meanwhile, an estimated 145,000 North Vietnamese troops are permitted to remain in South Vietnam, in attendance upon the resolution of the country's political problems.

The central fact that a determined revolutionary party possessing its own armed forces and supported by another army remains in the field, in circumstances where the basic power issue remains unresolved, indicates sharply the uncertainties surrounding the political future of South Vietnam in particular. The January 27th agreement, comprising nine chapters and four protocols, is characterized by great complexity, no little ambiguity, and some sheer Byzantinism. It falls far short of neatly charting the course of future events in Indochina. Perhaps its most striking feature is that, whereas the United States refused to accede to the Geneva Accords marking the end of the French Indochinese War, now it has formally subscribed to certain basic elements of that 1954 settlement. Article 1 of the new agreement provides that "The United States and all other countries respect the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam." (It is not explained how Kissinger and Tho deemed themselves authorized to speak for "all other countries.") The military demarcation line along the 17th Parallel, dividing Vietnam temporarily into two zones, is defined with reference to the Final Declaration of the 1954 Geneva Conference; and the present agreement accepts the restrictions imposed upon North and South Vietnam in 1954 with respect to adherence to military alliances or permitting foreign powers to maintain military bases, troops, military advisers and military personnel "on their respective territories."

One element of the agreement catches the eye: all the monitoring stations for the supervisory truce teams are to be located in South Vietnam. This naturally reflects the circumstance that the ground troops of the four forces engaged in the fighting are all located in South Vietnam; but it points up the most significant difference between South and North Vietnam at the end of the war: North Vietnam is in a position to enjoy true peace and reconstruction; South Vietnam, on the other hand, is to be the arena for a future struggle between clashing forces. There, the National Liberation Front (NLF) occupies substantial blocks of territory in the north, in a long strip bordering Cambodia on the west, and in the Mekong delta. But, in all truth, the NLF forces present their challenge broadly throughout South Vietnam in a "leopard-spot" pattern, as shown by the distribution of the control teams.

The agreement stipulates that "The armed forces of the two South Vietnamese parties shall remain in place." In a truly Alice-in-Wonderland clause, it further provides that *immediately* after a cease-fire the two parties *will* "Achieve national reconciliation and concord, end hatred and enmity, prohibit all acts of reprisal and discrimination against individuals or organizations that have collaborated with one side or the other." If there is "serious" violation in implementation of the agreement, "or a threat to peace against which the commission can find no appropriate measure," the International Commission of Control and Supervision "shall report this to the four parties to the agreement so that they can hold consultations to find a solution." But no body wields authority to *impose* a solution. Effective implementation of the cease-fire depends in good measure upon the *bona fides* of the two antagonists—in circumstances where the political conflict continues and manifestly little good faith exists.

Then there is the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord, to be composed of "three equal segments." Originally, the putative "neutralists" were to make up the third "equal segment." But neither autocrats

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nor Communists place much stock in neutralists. Thieu addressed himself to the subject in December 1969 by stating that "Those who follow the way of the third force are imbeciles; as to neutralism, it means the death of South Vietnam." And in November 1972, according to a Saigon newspaper, he addressed a letter to President Nixon stating that no third segment existed in the South; there were but two components, the nationalist and the Communist. The Thieu argument seems to have made an impression. According to Dr. Kissinger, the Council members are to be "equally appointed by the two sides," that is, they will be partisans of one or the other chief antagonist. The true middle-of-the-road elements of South Vietnam are not to be viewed as a real political "force" and will not count in the final reckoning; they command no battalions.

The National Council is designated as the instrumentality charged with promoting implementation of an agreement "on the internal affairs of South Vietnam" that the two parties are to reach within ninety days; and, it is to organize "genuinely free and democratic elections under international supervision"—to institutions also to be first agreed upon by the NLF and Saigon. The reference to democratic elections is pure American. In the existing circumstances democratic procedures would be to the profit of the NLF, which would thereby have the opportunity of advancing its political program through election of its candidates to office. Consequently, the NLF naturally favors the electoral process. But Nguyen Van Thieu has shown categorical opposition to anything that smacks of sharing power with the Communists. Speaking on October 12 of last year, when Kissinger's negotiations with Tho were drawing to their presumed conclusion, Thieu said that history showed that coalition with Communists meant death, that the best solution for South Vietnam was a military victory; and, "We have to kill the Communists to the last man before we have peace."

Thieu would stand only to lose by election procedures which by their nature threaten to abridge his autocracy. We may grant that, in abstract theory, the two contending parties might decide to submit to the people the issues of whether they would prefer communism or autocracy, and then enable the electorate to vote for Thieu's dictatorship—or even for communism. So far has American service of the principle of self-determination progressed! But since the National Council is to operate on the principle of unanimity, and neither party has real reason to trust the other, its smooth functioning for the determination of South Vietnam's political future is not to be expected as a matter of practical politics. More: it is reasonably apparent that, if free and democratic elections really were to be held in South Vietnam (where there never have been such elections), the United States would have to join with the International Commission in forcing compliance on Thieu—for the ultimate benefit of the NLF.

That seems, on the face of it, improbable. Yet, grant the hypothetical possibility. Then, Thieu theoretically might go so far as to endeavor to maintain his autocratic rule in open defiance of the provisions of the treaty, or the exhortations of his protector power. In fact, however, he is vulnerable to powerful leverage, for he confronts a highly unfavorable economic situation. Vast destruction has been wrought in South Vietnam by Saigon's "ally," the United States. What was said by a U.S. Army officer of the unfortunate town of Ben Tré might well be paraphrased by Washington to apply to the country as a whole: "We had to destroy South Vietnam in order to save it." South Vietnam is now a region

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of razed towns and shattered agriculture. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee from bombed villages and now live, destitute, in refugee camps near the larger towns. The refugees are dependent upon the government for their daily needs—and the government is in turn dependent upon American financial aid. The good earth itself, besides being scoured of many of its tillers, has been so bombed, bulldozed and otherwise mauled by the U.S. military machine as to have lost much of its productivity. With respect to so fundamental an item as rice, a commodity which South Vietnam used to export in large quantities, heavy imports from the United States are now essential. South Vietnam no longer possesses a viable economy.

Now the economy is being further weakened automatically by the American troop *withdrawal*. National income derived from expenditures connected with maintaining the U.S. military establishment on Vietnamese soil has already substantially declined; urban unemployment has increased. Even partial implementation of the demobilization contemplated by the January agreement for Saigon's armed forces (ARVN) would exacerbate the situation. Currency inflation is a symptom of serious economic imbalance; and with further diminution of the flow of U.S. dollars and American supplies it would tend to accelerate. The overall situation is complicated by the factors of graft and malfeasance—neither of which is to be remedied by the application of still more dollars.

Because of the operation of certain political factors, too, peace threatens to bring added disorder into the Thieu camp. The essential element of the Vietnamization concept—the provision of direct U.S. military support to an Asian government threatened by revolution—has now been eliminated from the equation, and one discovers close parallels to the situation that prevailed in postwar China. As in China, America will give financial and economic assistance, provide military equipment (at least, to the degree needed to keep the ARVN materiel at its present bloated level) and, very probably, in spite of the treaty prohibition, offer some military advice through the sympathetic U.S. Embassy and the numerous American "civilian" advisers. However, given Thieu's autocratic character, the inefficiency and favoritism prevalent in Saigon's armed forces, *and* the sadly deteriorated economic situation, it is to be anticipated as probable that the "Chiang Kai-shek syndrome" will operate in the period of critical political struggle ahead, and that the Thieu regime will fail to reform in order to deal with the changing situation.

In the area of economic aid, it is unlikely that a budget-minded Congress will permit the open-handed largesse to continue in future as it has in the past. The Thieu regime will now have to prove itself, to a degree. And the Nixon Administration, having enjoined Congress to exercise frugality, will be caused to act cautiously. Not only must Congressional sentiment be respected; it will also be necessary to meet the somewhat critical expectations of other countries. There is projected the convening of an international conference which is, *inter alia*, to guarantee the ending of the war and "to contribute to and guarantee peace in Indochina." From that conference, Washington doubtless hopes to gain some sanction for its policies, and the participation of other countries in maintaining the peace and in rehabilitating the economy of Indochina. Thieu's self-assigned task will be to maneuver the United States into intervening militarily on his behalf once more—by making it appear that the January agreement has been breached by "the enemy"—before the international conference might write a legal "finis" to his hopes; but he will be concerned at the same time that his tactics do not bring about a reduction, instead of the desired increase, of American support. Washington, for its part, would not wish its plans disturbed and its own hopes dashed by arrogant diplomacy on the part of a headstrong President Thieu.

Assuming the above propositions, certain tentative forecasts seem warranted. Insofar as democratic procedures may be employed to implement the January accord, Thieu will probably often be found recalcitrant; whereas the revolutionaries, who stand to benefit the more from the expression of popular mandate, will in practice be led to cite treaty provisions and to appeal to the United States, whose hallowed traditional phrases are enshrined in the text, for support of their position in opposition to Thieu. The probabilities seem to be that the United States would find it difficult to justify, in the eyes of the world, a new military intervention grounded upon a hypothetical charge that the revolutionaries had breached the agreement. That would be true, I suggest, even in the hypothetical case that the revolutionaries overthrew the Thieu government as the culmination of a chain of events sparked by Thieu's refusal to live up to the stipulation that there be a "democratic" resolution of the problem of power in South Vietnam. For then it would have been Thieu who had breached the agreement.

As noted in the beginning, the focus of the Vietnamese conflict is to be found in the southern half of the country. Cambodia and Laos were made part of the formal war theatre by the Nixon Administration's military assaults on those countries in 1970 and 1971 respectively. And yet, the January 27th cease-fire applies only to Vietnam. True, Dr. Kissinger said in his briefing of the press that the United States had an "expectation" that the cease-fire would soon be extended to Laos, and later to Cambodia. No evidence has yet been forthcoming to support such expectation.

Instead, serious doubt regarding the claim seems in order. The January 27th agreement stipulates that "The parties participating in the Paris conference on Vietnam shall strictly respect the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Cambodia and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos. . . ." Further, "The parties shall respect the neutrality of Cambodia and Laos." This clearly binds the United States, as well as North and South Vietnam. By all indications, no American negotiations have been held with either the Pathet Lao or the Khmer Rouge—or even with Prince Norodom Sihanouk at Peking—with respect to the matter in point. To be sure, Kissinger, under press questioning on January 24, permitted the inference that *Hanoi* had committed itself to bringing the Laotian revolutionaries into line. But a question immediately arises: in circumstances where the Pathet Lao control the major part of Laotian territory, what would be the *quid pro quo* in

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a settlement terminating the Pathet Lao insurgency? When they are winning, would they settle for less than a prominent position in the Vientiane government?

We have a handy point of reference to test that expectation. The neutrality contemplated for Laos in the 1962 agreements can hardly be considered to make allowance for foreign military intervention; and yet, notwithstanding the provision of the new agreement respecting Laos and Cambodia, the U.S. Air Force, *after* the effective date of the cease-fire and despite the presumptive observance of the agreement by our prime antagonist, Hanoi, has attacked what Washington defined as suspected Communist positions and supply lines in Laos; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William H. Sullivan, who has played an important role in the negotiations with Hanoi, indicated on January 28 that the bombing would continue until a cease-fire might be reached—in Laos. It appears inherently unlikely that Washington would take such a stand, in open disregard of the indicated treaty commitment, if it already had even faint promise of Pathet Lao agreement.

And, as Kissinger himself suggested, the situation as regards Cambodia is even more complicated. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, from his refuge in Peking, declared in October that his supporters in Cambodia would continue the struggle against the government at Phnom Penh even if peace were brought to Vietnam; and in an interview of January 27 he emphatically rejected any thought of a settlement with the "traitorous" Lon Nol regime and asserted that the war would be carried on for another decade if need be. This substantiates the belief that a considerable distance still separates Cambodia from a cease-fire—to say nothing of a political settlement. Inasmuch as the January agreement proposes no more for South Vietnam itself than that the two antagonists shall themselves work out their countries' political destiny, what solutions might Washington have proposed for the Cambodian and Laotian revolutions that Dr. Kissinger should feel so confident that cease-fires in those countries are to be expected?

There is no evidence that Asian revolutions are to be disposed of that readily. In South Vietnam, the political position of the NLF has been legitimized, and some 145,000 North Vietnamese troops remain on the scene to insure the Front against a slaughter such as that undertaken by Ngo Dinh Diem in 1955. And it is literally beyond belief that Washington could have so seduced the revolutionaries of Cambodia and Laos, who have grown notably stronger by reason of American military incursions into the two countries, that they will quietly lay down their arms and submit to Washington's creature regimes in Phnom Penh and Vientiane. Thieu's informed estimate that the signing of the cease-fire agreement does not by itself mean peace is borne out by the initial violations of the cease-fire. Because the political conflicts in Indochina remain unresolved, peace is still to be constructed. The task is laborious, and there is no certainty that the concerned Asian peoples will accomplish it without still more bloodshed. But it will at least be easier with the Americans out of the way.

So, for 46,000 American battle dead, the expenditure of $136 billion, the distortion of the American economy, and the sad tarnishing of the American world image and consequent loss of political influence, we get—*this*—and we officially call it "peace with honor." If it be deemed honorable, the United States supported a series of reactionary Saigon governments well beyond the call of any imagined duty; and it was not defeated on the field of battle—but it never stood in danger of that. The final outcome did however make quite manifest something that could readily have been learned from 20th-century history, namely that B-52s are ineffective for fighting revolutionary ideas in the age of nationalism. Washington failed lamentably to appreciate Asian post-colonial aspirations, to understand the nature of the modern Asian revolution. By the evidence, the policy makers in Washington never really understood, from beginning to end, what the Indochinese revolution was all about—that it was inherently a *political*, not a military, struggle. Blinded by this error, the United States tried to dominate and suppress the Indochinese revolutionaries—and failed ingloriously. Whether it can repair its position in Asia will depend on whether it has learned the lesson of its eleven-year Indochinese war: Asia is not to be molded after American patterns. □

PERON AND OPULENCE

THE MYTHS OF ARGENTINA

PENNY LERNOUX
Miss Lernoux is South American correspondent in Bogotá for Copley News Service.

Buenos Aires

Juan Domingo Perón is back in Madrid, nursing a wounded ego and a shattered myth, so they say. *"El líder's"* return to Argentina last November, ending seventeen years in exile, turned out to be something of an anticlimax after all the talk of a popular uprising, not to mention the spectacle of 35,000 troops deployed at the airport to prevent the aging politician from greeting "my people." Whether the tear gas, the spring downpour or sheer apathy was responsible for Perón's disappointing reception, most of the 3 million Argentines expected to converge on the plane preferred to stay home—as they have done during the country's last three revolutions—and watch his return on television.

True, some 100,000 Argentines visited Perón's house in the Buenos Aires suburbs, but there were no mass

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rallies, no Peronist *muchachos* marching on the Presidential palace, no large crowds at the airport to see him off when he left twenty-seven days later. The man is old, the magic gone, the legend dead, so they say, and at last Argentina has rid itself of the *caudillo* who divided and ruled the country from exile for nearly two decades.

Perón himself admits that he is old and tired, but the magic and the charm still linger, else how could the hated dictator bring together nearly all the country's political parties in one meeting, including the orthodox Left and the middle-class radicals, both former enemies? The generals who have been running Argentina for more than six years have never done it, despite constant reference to a "great national accord." As to the legend, that in itself is a myth because Argentina's dilemma does not stem from a single man but from a nation. For years, all of Argentina's economic and political woes have been attributed to Perón, the assumption being that once Perón, now 77, is dead, the country can recover from the deep political and social divisions he has caused. The popular image of Perón, at least in the United States, still is of a Fascist dictator harboring Nazi spies, an unscrupulous man who brought ruin to a prosperous and peaceful nation.

Shortly after I moved to Argentina in 1967, I met a stevedore who in one sentence made nonsense of all those assumptions: "If Perón was so bad, how come the country hasn't been able to produce anything better than him in all these years?" How come, indeed, since Argentina is a nation of the most literate and best-fed people in Latin America living on some of the richest land in the world?

Despite the shattered myth, Perón undoubtedly would win the Presidential elections scheduled for March 11 if the generals allowed him to run, which they won't. Even using a dull, aged stand-in, Perón, in exile, is expected to attract 35 to 40 per cent of the votes. Hector Campora, a retired dentist and Perón's personal representative, in all likelihood will be the next President of Argentina. His principal opponents—a party hack from the radicals, a recently retired air force brigadier representing the military and an opportunistic ex-naval captain from the extreme Right—explain why the country "hasn't been able to produce anything better" than Perón since his overthrow in 1955. The only interesting new face to emerge in all these years, ex-President Arturo Frondizi, was overthrown by the military just as he was about to achieve some economic and political breakthroughs, and he is now a political has-been. The elections will change nothing, just as six and a half years of military rule have changed nothing, and the nation that once was the eighth richest in the world will still be wondering why it cannot achieve its enormous economic potential. Likewise, Perón's death will not be the panacea it is touted to be.

Part of Argentina's dilemma is historic: the country has had only four freely elected, relatively democratic governments since it achieved independence. Hence, few Argentines grasp what democracy really means. The roots of the malaise lie deeper, however, and they help explain the paradox of material wealth with political incompetence. The same things that attract visitors to Buenos Aires—the $1 T-bone steaks, the marvelous wine, the chic women, the glittering night clubs and the continent's greatest opera house—also have contributed to the country's economic and political plight. When you see dozens of loaves of bread discarded in a gutter or pass a construction site where the workers are barbecuing their lunch-time steer or join the crowds at the world's largest casino in Mar del Plata, you begin to comprehend why foreign residents claim that Buenos Aires is the last luxury bargain left in the world. "There is no place in Europe or the United States where one can live so well for so little," said a wealthy Englishman who has retired here.

There is a price for high living, but it is unfashionable and unpopular to talk about it. Myths, including the legend called Perón, are easier to believe than reality. Thus, they say there are no Indians in Argentina (250,000 have somehow survived); there is no poverty (except in the northern provinces and those shantytowns ringing Buenos Aires); Patagonia is awash in oil (the geologists just can't find it); the pampa soil does not need fertilizer (all studies to the contrary); and Argentina must build more industries because there is something demeaning about agricultural exports (notwithstanding the fact that Argentine steaks earn the country a great deal more than Argentine computers). That the country has decapitalized its greatest resource, the land, and is living beyond its means are realities no politician dares discuss publicly. Yet as one ex-finance minister admits, "A people who prefer to spend their money on high-priced paintings or opera instead of depositing it in a savings account either have to be very rich or very confused. Our priorities are wrong. We simply cannot afford the luxuries we take for granted." Certainly, one is taken aback when the head of a union (in a supposedly workingman's society) owns one of the country's most expensive collection of paintings.

The Argentine myth denies all this. It is easier to explain away the 60 per cent annual inflation rate, a $2.4 billion foreign debt and enormous budget deficits by blaming the lingering economic mess on Perón's spendthrift policies, yet oddly enough only a year before his overthrow the conservative Buenos Aires Stock Exchange, of all organizations, praised Perón's economic policies as "forward-looking."

The myth actually dates back to a period much earlier than Perón, at the turn of the century when Argentina was an agricultural El Dorado and an emerging power, wealthy *estancieros* lived like kings in Paris, and hundreds of thousands of Spanish, Italian, French and German immigrants poured into the promised land. The *estancieros* might even now be living like kings in Paris were it not for three crucial events—the election of Hipólito Irigoyen as President in 1916, his overthrow in 1930, and World War II.

Irigoyen's election was important because it broke the political monopoly of the landed oligarchy, forcing them to share power with the sons of immigrant shopkeepers and merchants. Moreover, for the first time in their history,

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the Argentine people were able to elect a President freely, without fear of fraud. Though an autocrat and a poor administrator, Irigoyen belonged to the people. After he died, thousands of mourners climbed the narrow steps to his modest apartment and nearly half a million attended his funeral procession.

Following Irigoyen's overthrow, the wealthy landowners again seized political power, ruling the country for more than a decade as a private fiefdom. Neither the constitution nor the rights of the people were respected; instead, successive governments fostered the illusion of a Dorado, telling urban workers how lucky they were to be in the land of plenty while refusing to share any of the benefits. Blind to the shifts in economic power or the change in the population's make-up, the *estancieros* failed totally to understand that the immigrant's son was not content simply to be living in Argentina instead of in some backward fishing village in Italy. As in the United States, the second and third generations wanted a share of the prosperity and of the government. Moreover, the landed aristocracy refused to recognize a fundamental change taking place in the economy: by 1941, for example, only 10 of the 100 people paying the highest income tax were *estancieros*; the others were manufacturers, financiers, importers and owners of casinos, theatres and radio stations.

With the advent of World War II, the economy began to collapse. Grain shipments piled up in the ports because most of the European markets were inaccessible, imported merchandise grew scarce, prices skyrocketed along with speculation, and the already restive urban workers grew more discontent with their low pay. The memory of Irigoyen was very much alive, and so in 1943 when a group of army officers seized power the stage was set for the emergence of its cleverest member as a popular dictator.

Times have changed since then, and neither the Argentines nor the old man who returned from Madrid are the same people who lived out the dramas of the 1940s. What many people have forgotten in the current situation is that Perón built his power base from the military and extended it to a popular mandate through organized labor. (Even the most rabid anti-Peronist will not dispute that the 1946 Presidential election, which Perón won by a landslide, was among the few clean and free elections in the nation's history.) Since Irigoyen's overthrow in 1930, only two Presidents have been able to combine military power with political authority. One was Gen. Agustín P. Justo, constitutional President between 1932 and 1938; the other was Perón. Together, they account for fifteen years of government. During the other twenty-eight years, fourteen civil and military Presidents could not achieve an average of two years in power. Gen. Alejandro Lanusse, the current strongman of Argentina, has the guns but not the votes. Perón can still count on at least 35 per cent of the votes but he lacks the guns.

Like Irigoyen, whose mantle he assumed, Perón was an autocrat, but autocratic methods were necessary to achieve any reforms in a country which, in 1943, had some of the most backward social and labor legislation in the hemisphere. Within two years, Perón established a National Institute of Social Security, giving Argentina the most advanced social insurance system in South America; instituted collective bargaining and compulsory annual holidays; and began the construction of low-cost workers' housing. Jealous of Perón's increasing popularity and power, the military junta placed him under arrest in October 1945. It was too late. Large-scale riots erupted throughout the country, and on October 17, a day sacred in all Peronists' memories, a 26-year-old blonde named Eva Duarte led thousands of men in shirt sleeves, *los descamisados*, in a march on the Presidential palace.

The Listener (London)

Perón, Seen by the Argentine Artist Sabat

Perón was released, and four days later he married his famous *compañera*. He was elected President the following February.

For most of World War II, Perón was unabashedly pro-Axis; indeed, many of his ideas about a corporate state were learned during the two years he spent studying political philosophy in Mussolini's Italy. Shortly before the 1943 coup which propelled him to power, Colonel Perón wrote a widely circulated document in which he announced that "Hitler's fight in peace and war shall be our guide. A civilian will never understand the greatness of our ideal; we shall therefore have to eliminate them from the government, and give them the only mission which corresponds to them: work and obedience."

Foreign ideologies, democracy as much as fascism, rarely survive the trans-Atlantic crossing to Latin America, where they are given a *criollo* interpretation quite unlike

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their European model. Despite the Colonel's flattering writings about Hitler and fascism, Perón's Argentina never resembled Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany, or even Franco's Spain. Moreover, in 1943, the majority of the people did not want to enter the war, despite an overwhelming sympathy for the Allies' cause. In refusing to break off diplomatic and commercial relations with the Axis, Perón was following a policy already established by his civilian predecessor, President Ramón S. Castillo, a right-wing reactionary who represented the landowners' interests. Both Castillo and Perón based their policies on the precedent set by Irigoyen, who insisted on Argentine neutrality during World War I—a position which proved highly beneficial to the economy. Argentina's geographic isolation at the bottom of the continent has always been a factor in the nation's make-up and it further helps explain why men of such varying ideologies as Irigoyen, Castillo and Perón preferred neutrality.

During the first phase of Perón's nine-year administration, social legislation and economic independence were the cornerstones of what would evolve into his Justicialist doctrine. The Central Bank was nationalized (Perón claimed that only four members of the bank's board spoke Spanish) as were shipping, aviation, the telephone system and the railroads. An Argentine Institute for the Promotion of Trade was established to buy and sell the country's agricultural produce at the best price available, while the official Bank of Industrial Credit helped promote industrial enterprises. Although many of these state enterprises have since become a financial drag on the economy, Perón's economic nationalism did help the country achieve a measure of independence, particularly in its relations with Great Britain, until the war Argentina's principal trading partner.

Evita, as the *descamisados* affectionately called her, spurred much of the social reform which characterized the early years of Perón's administration. Through a newly created Ministry of Health and her own Social Aid Foundation, hospitals were constructed, clothing and food distributed to the poor, and campaigns, many of them successful, launched to eradicate malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy. Under her influence, women were given the vote and a vast quantity of social welfare reforms was legislated, including a forty-hour week, holidays with pay, pension funds, and a minimum wage for the agricultural laborer as well as the urban worker.

Like Perón, Evita came from a humble background and, therefore, despised the aristocracy which snubbed her but was forced to contribute to her foundation. She was more warm-hearted, more driven and more vindictive than her husband. "Without fanaticism one cannot accomplish anything," she often said. The poorer classes worshipped her, and when she died of cancer at the age of 33, they sought to have her canonized "the Madonna of America."

Many Argentines believe that had Evita lived, she could have prevented her husband's overthrow in 1955, just as she had secured his release from prison a decade before. General Lanusse claims the only reason Perón has any visitors in Madrid is because he keeps Eva's body in his house. There is some basis of truth in Lanusse's sardonic observation, because Eva gave Perón's government a certain glamour and human warmth that was missing in the later years, and it was she who persuaded her hesitant husband to make many important political decisions. However, it was Perón's view of history, not Eva's good works, that insured him the lasting loyalties of millions of Argentines, and he began to formulate those ideas long before he met the obscure radio actress. Perón, not Gamal Abdel Nasser, was the first leader in the developing nations to suggest the now fashionable idea that the Third World should reject both the United States' capitalism and the Soviet Union's communism, as being incompatible with the indigent needs of emerging nations.

Eva's death and an economic downturn in 1952 marked a significant change in Perón's policies. While his government continued to extend social welfare programs and promoted a large number of cooperatives, Perón no longer automatically sided with the workers. Wage freezes were applied along with price freezes; credits were extended to revive the languishing agricultural sector; laws were passed to attract foreign investment, and by the time Perón was overthrown, the former champion of economic independence was negotiating with Standard Oil of California for the exploitation of petroleum resources in Patagonia.

Increasing repression, a nasty dispute with the Roman Catholic Church, the closure of *La Prensa* and, perhaps most important, the unbridled corruption which characterized his last years in power assured Perón's downfall. On September 19, 1955, he was overthrown by the armed forces and fled the country in a Paraguayan gunboat. He left behind a $1 billion debt, an almost empty treasury (foreign reserves were $457 million, down from $1.7 billion in 1946) and a deeply divided nation.

What was it like to live in the Argentina of Perón and Evita? "We simply couldn't use the club because *she* encouraged the workers to come to our beach," said a smartly dressed, fiftyish woman as we sat drinking gin and tonic in one of Buenos Aires' expensive yacht clubs. "*She* told them the beaches are public, but you can imagine what those people did to the lawn."

"My mother was very upset about the schools," recalled a pretty Anglo-Argentine blonde. "Instead of Jack and Jill in the primers, we learned to read by reciting 'Evita loves me' and 'I love Evita.' "

"Those were good times when the ordinary worker felt he had some rights," a house painter remembered. "We had decent housing and enough to eat. Look at us now. Most of us have to hold down two jobs, and what do we find on the dinner table when we get home? Pasta instead of steak."

Perón left many legacies behind, but most of his policies probably would have been put into effect even had he not ruled Argentina for nine years. Economic nationalism, social reform and state ownership of basic resources are taken for granted in most of South America today. Indeed, Peru's reformist generals and Chile's Marxist government make Perón's social and economic policies seem modest in retrospect. Perón did do two things, how-

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ever, which, though seemingly justifiable at the time, only encouraged a national tendency to prefer high-priced paintings to savings accounts.

Under his government, the Argentine myth of unlimited prosperity, which once applied only to the landed aristocracy, was enlarged to include everyone, but most particularly the urban worker. The decadence which began to set in during the early part of the century grew like some incurable disease as the sons of the immigrants and the later waves of European refugees began to take material comfort for granted. Unlike those that came before them, "everything had been done" and they were satisfied with what one Argentine novelist describes as "an easy Argentina." If there is not a single excellent Italian restaurant in all of Buenos Aires, a city built by Italian immigrants, that may be because the inhabitants have grown accustomed to mediocre pasta, just as they have grown accustomed to second-rate political parties and second-rate leaders. A revolution is just another television show.

Perón's second legacy encouraged another trend which already had become evident when he seized power: to tax the land in order to pay for industries, many of which were and still are questionable frills to satisfy the national ego. Perón's chief adviser during the first part of his administration was a self-made industrialist, Miguel Miranda, who believed the nation's farms should pay for rapid industrialization which, in turn, would encourage more jobs and higher pay for the urban laborer, the base of Perón's political support. Miranda's policy, begun in 1947, has not changed to this day. Grain and beef exports are heavily taxed, agricultural credits are extremely limited, and fertilizer is so expensive that it is beyond the economic reach of most farmers. Moreover, while most people still think of an Argentine ranch as a horizonless expanse—which some are—most of the grains produced in the humid *pampa* are grown on farms smaller than 200 acres. The owners of these farms are not rich nor even comfortably well-off (few can afford a tractor, for example), yet they are the people who are paying for the sophisticated industries, the $1 T-bone steak, the "easy Argentina." They pay for the telephones that don't work, the mail service that doesn't arrive and a vast variety of state enterprises, some of which (i.e., the military factories that make plows and matches) are simply expensive toys for the generals.

In 1950, Argentina and Brazil each had 46 million head of cattle. Today, Argentina has 52 million head while Brazil owns 90 million. Similar statistics show the country's declining competitive export position in relation, for example, to Australian wool or U.S. wheat. "The Sleeping Giant" is how the Ford Foundation described Argentina's dismal agricultural performance in a review of the rural sector. (The thought that Argentina is sleeping on the world's largest block of double-cropping land, a *pampa* so rich that it could feed all of South America's undernourished millions, ought to give organizations like FAO genuine nightmares.)

Because farming is considered a skill any idiot can acquire, Argentine Governments have never concerned themselves with promoting technical schools for agronomists, much less advanced education for agroeconomists. No university faculty offers a Ph.D. in agriculture, and undergraduate courses are equivalent to a U.S. high school degree, not only for agriculture but for most other professions. (One theory explains Argentina's decadence as a result of the low level of education.) Neither the agricultural ministry nor any of the official or private farm organizations has a coherent idea of what is happening on the land because they are incapable of gathering or interpreting statistics.

FAO and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have attempted to help the Argentines increase productivity, only to be rebuffed as foreigners who cannot understand that the Argentines already know it all. One Australian soil expert working with FAO went home in frustration after trying, for three years, to explain to the Argentines that soil conservation is necessary. The Ford Foundation has sent thirty-seven Argentines to the United States to obtain Ph.D.s in agriculture, but they are not expected to stay long in Argentina on their return, even with foundation subsidies to supplement their income. Like a previous group of physicists trained under the foundation's auspices, the new Ph.D.s probably will join the brain drain to the United States because few Argentines will accept the idea that highly specialized skills are necessary in agriculture as well as physics.

By favoring the cities over the land, successive Argentine Governments have failed to understand that food, too, can be industrialized. Hence, what should be Argentina's greatest industry still remains an afterthought. Impossible as it may seem, the economy ministry deliberately depressed grain plantings between 1967 and 1970. "We're promoting nontraditional exports such as costume jewelry and handbags," the Under Secretary of Commerce explained. Argentina sold very little costume jewelry and ended up by importing wheat.

Because the Argentines have refused to renounce their myth, none of the governments that followed Perón has been able to sort out the economic mess. Indeed, there have been seven economy ministers since the military toppled the last civilian government in mid-1966. Such is the confusion of Argentine economics and politics that it became customary every June to predict that the economy minister's head would roll or the President's or both, and they usually did.

If Perón can command the loyalties of large numbers of young Argentines, that is because there has been no stability, no coherent political or economic policy during most of the time they have been growing up. Despite the repression, the corruption and the spending sprees, Perón at least gave Argentines a sense of national destiny. The generals have given the country nothing but repression.

Today, Peronismo without Perón is widely accepted, although it may be called nationalism, economic independence or Third World philosophy, and for the first time in eighteen years, the Peronists will be allowed to participate in elections next March. While General Lanusse, with his arrogance and his somber mien, hardly could be called an engaging personality, he at least has gone so far as to accept Peronismo without Perón, the first of his caste to do so since 1955. Yet without the

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vigorous leadership of a charismatic leader—and Perón is too sedentary and old for the job—Peronismo as an ideology is so vague as to be meaningless. The Justicialista Liberation Front, a movement grouping seventeen parties and political groups, includes right-wing businessmen, center-of-the-road labor leaders and extreme Left urban guerrillas. Even a younger Perón living in Argentina would have difficulty pulling together such a diverse political college. Like the General Confederation of Labor, which over the years has grown fat and mindless of the workers' needs, Peronismo has developed into a set of vague "isms" instead of a practical plan of action which would serve the nation.

Foreigners often observe that one of the fundamental weaknesses of Argentine politics is the plethora of parties (more than 100 in the last elections) that represent no one and cannot agree on anything. Certainly, there is an anarchistic streak in Argentine politics which dates back to the first Italian immigrations. The Argentines are agreed on one thing, however, and that is that they are tired of military rule and that the military is tired of ruling. Up to a point, of course.

One of the conditions for the March elections is that all Presidential candidates must sign a "Pact of Guarantees" which insures a continuing military role in government, acceptance of all international finance agreements made during the generals' administration and no reprisals of the sort that characterized Perón's government and the military dictatorships which followed him. Thus the Argentines will have a conditional democracy which, when one considers the past six and a half years of military dictatorship, may be better than no democracy at all. To judge by the campaign statements however, democracy will simply carry on the myth. The divisions, the sense of lost identity in all probability will remain, and the three-year-old urban guerrilla war which has enlisted so many disillusioned Argentine youths is likely to continue.

Buenos Aires must be the only capital in the world in which Sunday guests can sit down to lunch in their bathing suits in a palatial mansion and be served a four-course meal on silver plates by a white-gloved butler. That the Argentines can afford such luxuries in 1973, or would want them, may seem amazing, but in the mythical land of an "easy Argentina" everything—and nothing—is possible. □

OPEN ADMISSIONS

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

PETER SOURIAN

Mr. Sourian, novelist and associate professor of English at Bard College, has taught writing in Harlem for the Writers' and Teachers' Collaborative, and remedial English in the City College evening session.

City College, long the queen of the nineteen campuses of the tuition-free City University of New York (CUNY), stands on a cliff overlooking Harlem. Some people fear that the college may be about to crumble and fall in; others see it standing firm as ever, with a rope ladder flung down into the depths of the ghetto.

The saving rope or undermining force—depending on your point of view—is the policy of Open Admissions. Under Open Admissions, instituted two and a half years ago, any student with a New York City high school diploma, no matter what his grades, has an automatic right to matriculate free at one of the city colleges. As a result, in September 1970, 35,000 freshmen were admitted, 15,000 more than in the previous year. Although 65 per cent of those who would not otherwise have been admitted were white, the proportion of black and Puerto Rican students increased from 20 to 26 per cent, and continues to rise.

City College had always been free, but with stiff academic competition for the available places. The college was originally founded in 1847 with the express purpose of letting "the children of the rich and poor take their seats together and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct and intellect." A great many poor, brilliant, highly motivated kids (more than half of them Jews) earned diplomas after completing a rigorous program. The list of graduates is impressive; it includes Nobel Prize Laureates, a Supreme Court Justice, a half-dozen college presidents, scores of legislators (Shirley Chisholm is one), writers, entertainers, all-purpose intellectuals, professionals and hundreds of exceptional teachers; also Bernard Baruch.

In 1969, the year before Open Admissions, the number of City College entrants who had earned A averages in high school was triple the national percentage. Obviously, that can no longer be the case. Now, riffling through page after page of the test scores which are used to determine the extent of remedial work that each entering student may need in reading, writing and math, I see hardly any scores above the rock-bottom minimum.

What's so new about Open Admissions? After all, European academics were long ago shocked by the fact that our land-grant colleges had from the beginning offered free tuition to all but the most abysmally qualified students. But such institutions, like Michigan State University, are famous for their "revolving-door" admissions policies, which means that, once admitted, the freshmen sink or swim. City College and the other CUNY colleges, on the other hand, are committed to making it really possible for all those freshmen to graduate.

The Master Plan of the Board of Higher Education of New York City, first formulated in 1966, determined that it would "offer the benefits of post-high school education

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to all residents who are able and eager to avail themselves of these benefits." It was argued that from their first years in the educational system blacks and Puerto Ricans had been systematically if perhaps unconsciously shunted off the college track, thus stopped cold before they'd had the slightest chance to start moving up the socioeconomic ladder.

Yes—went an argument for Open Admissions—it was the smart Jewish kids who were groomed from the start for entrance to City College; they were taught by former smart Jewish kids who themselves had graduated from City into high school teaching and were engaged in self-perpetuation. Since the 1930s City College had become their preserve, as Yale, say, had been a WASP-establishment preserve. Therefore, blacks and Puerto Ricans were being crippled by the very system which professed to offer an all-American opportunity to all.

The way to rectify the error would be to grant a kind of academic amnesty for mediocre secondary-school performance, to decree that virtually anyone with enough motivation to fill out and mail a simple form could start from scratch as a college freshman. (In fact, when Open Admissions was implemented in 1970, CUNY embarked on a full-scale recruiting program.)

But, innocents might ask, why not try to rectify the error at a point closer to its apparent origin—the beginning of the formal educational process? Present CUNY Chancellor Robert Kibbee told me that "the cost would be astronomically higher at that level, since the number of people involved is so much greater." It's better, he suggests, to take advantage of the self-selection operating at the college level, since only the more highly motivated students will take advantage of OAP. Most of the educators I have spoken to state freely that the city's secondary-school system has failed miserably and that Open Admissions is a salvage operation designed to redeem those babes who can be snatched from the flames.

Such a policy, at best problematical and expensive in any case, calls for intensive remedial programs. This past year, for example, there were ninety remedial math sections at City College alone—three times the number scheduled during the first year of the new dispensation. In the old days, of those who went directly into the rigorous regular math courses, about 30 per cent would fail. Now, of those who go from the remedial courses into regular math, 62 per cent fail. Along with the increase in the number of remedial math sections, the number of honors calculus sections has dropped from fifteen to four, although twenty-five teachers were hired last year specifically to teach remedial math.

The 1966 Master Plan foresaw, of course, that massive "remediation" in the basic skills would have to be provided. Simply to continue teaching reading, writing and math at the college level, without working out more effective methods than those which had been ineffective at the earlier level, would be to compound the existing problem. Since implementation of the Open Admissions policy was not, according to the Master Plan, to take place until 1975, perhaps the SEEK program just beginning would serve as a kind of pilot experience for the much broader venture to come.

SEEK (Search for Elevation, Education and Knowledge) was and is an educational opportunity program initiated by mandate of the state legislature in 1966 to give holders of high school diplomas (or even equivalencies) from poverty neighborhoods a chance "to get into the mainstream of college education at one of the senior colleges."

The SEEK program gives money to students, on the ground that poverty-ridden students are poverty-*ridden,* and that free tuition by itself is not sufficient backing. Individual stipends go up to $60 a week, plus free books. SEEK also provides extra-intensive counseling with a counselor-student ratio of one to fifty. Further, it offers, through the various departments of the college, a graduated series of small remedial classes, teaching basic skills at an exceptionally slow rate, flexibly depending always on the actual needs of the students. Grades in these SEEK sections include an R, which indicates that the course must be repeated, but with no academic prejudice to the student. Here, there is no F, no failure.

It is evident then, that the criterion for selecting the relatively fortunate SEEK students is not academic excellence at all. The criterion is that one must come from a specifically designated "poverty area." Robert Young, former director of the SEEK program at City and now an associate dean, says that once this criterion is met students are chosen by random sample through a computer. The result is that 92 per cent of SEEK students are black or Puerto Rican. During the first year of SEEK there were 113 such students; there are now more than 2,000 at City alone. SEEK is funded separately from Open Admissions and the black-Puerto Rican caucus in Albany has made it clear that, as far as it is concerned, funding for SEEK has priority over funding for Open Enrollment in general, under which 65 per cent of the students are white—many of them from parochial schools. (The approval of CUNY's budget from both city and state governments is a cliffhanger each year, fraught with political razzle-dazzle.)

The academic challenge in 1966 was to create programs that would prepare SEEK students for normal college work as soon as possible. This was an unexpected task for the average departmental head, who often prided himself on developing advanced elective courses and cutting down on elementary stuff. Prof. Edmond Volpe, chairman of the English Department at the time, told me he was in the very process of trying to reduce or even eliminate the standard freshman composition course when he got a phone call asking if he would develop and staff an entire series of *pre*-standard freshman comp courses.

According to Volpe, Ph.D. types formed by the graduate schools aren't apt to be much good at such teaching; it wasn't at all what they'd had in mind when they chose their life work. Volpe now feels that these types will have to incorporate a sense of social responsibility into their professional self-images, or they may wake up to find that they've frozen into dinosaurs overnight. This sentiment seems to reflect a mood prevalent among administrators. Seymour Hyman, a deputy chancellor of CUNY, has dryly remarked that he for one never conceived of *any* university as a place where a teacher's

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primary function is to spend his life poring over ancient Egyptian inscriptions.

While SEEK was developing teachers for the bigger job awaiting them, Open Admissions, according to the Master Plan, was to go into effect in 1975. It had been recognized that time would be needed to plan sensibly. As Dr. Israel Kugler, head of what was then the United Federation of College Teachers (AFL-CIO), since merged with the Legislative Conference into the Professional Staff Conference, said, "This vision was not an impossible dream. But its viability could be tested only under conditions of adequate financing for sufficient staff, space and facilities."

The goal was to be reached in successive, carefully worked out stages. But in the spring of 1969 (with a mayoralty campaign on), City College was closed for two weeks after a lockout by 150 black and Puerto Rican students. There were some outbreaks of violence and a number of fires, along with similar, if less serious, disturbances at other CUNY colleges. One president, Kurt Schmeller of Queensborough, resisted, called for an injunction to end a sit-in. However, Dr. Buell Gallagher, then president of City, quickly closed his college down. About 700 students of its Engineering School went to class anyway, and Gallagher then asked the dean of that school to suspend operations, saying that otherwise his negotiations with the dissidents would be "seriously delayed." Soon after this brouhaha, implementation of the Master Plan was abruptly pushed forward by five full years; that is, it was put into operation immediately.

"This was disastrous," says Dr. Kugler. Believing as he does in the importance and necessity of Open Admissions, he has said that such haste under pressure was the best way to destroy, not only that innovation by making it eventually fail, but perhaps the entire City University system itself. Much of Kugler's concern has to do with adequate funding. At the time, Mayor Lindsay said that Open Admissions would be instituted, no matter what other city services had to be reduced, "even though drastic cuts may be necessary citywide." A year later, when budget time rolled around again (and Lindsay had been re-elected), he said, "New York City simply cannot afford to pay the bill. We do not have the money to pay for it." (The city foots more than half the bill for CUNY; the state pays the rest.) Last spring there was more panic than ever over the question of funding. There were more or less serious threats that some schools and colleges would have to be closed down, etc. Governor Rockefeller proposed charging tuition and pushed for absorption of CUNY into the state university system. Chancellor Kibbee's budget request of $550 million for 1973-74 has been certified by Mayor Lindsay at only $520 million; Rockefeller may very well make a further cut.

One way to look at the crash move is to believe that it was better to grab at the immediate possibility when there was a handle on it, even if conditions were far from ideal, rather than wait five years, when who knew what would be going on. But was it really necessary to plunge ahead blindly? Was the pressure of the violence at the time that heavy?

"It definitely was," states Marvin Schick, a tough, quick-minded young assistant to Lindsay for educational affairs. On the other hand, a CUNY administrator who is black and actively favors Open Admissions implies that perhaps it wasn't necessarily so. He says—off the record—that the lockout, fires and violence came *after* "Lindsay had asked blacks and Puerto Ricans pushing for OAP to give him pressure to work with."

Lindsay was not the only mayoralty candidate to come out in favor of OAP in 1969; they all did. This unanimity suggests that a political coalition may conceivably be emerging on a practical and therefore compelling basis—between the racial minority groups and the white "ethnics," stereotyped as bigoted and so respectful of the *status quo*. These two groups suddenly had a common advantage to gain, i.e., higher education for their children, something neither group had aggressively coveted before. Again, it should be remembered how things turned out: 65 per cent of OAP students are white.

And what is the reaction of the teaching staff of City College? For many, the change has not been happy, but most of them admit it only in private, and when pressed. One of the two campus pariahs most vociferously critical of the present situation is Dr. Louis Heller, an associate professor of classical languages with eight books to his credit. He has said flatly that he was passed over for promotion because of his stand: "Dr. Chavarria-Aguilar, the dean of the college, was not impressed by my scholarship." Though it has been pointed out that Heller has hardly any Open Admissions students in his classes, he maintains that it should be obvious to anyone that academic standards will inevitably fall, that it's an emperor's-clothing situation. Vice Chancellor Timothy Healy counters by saying it's not a question of how educated a student is when he enters college, but rather when he graduates. Also, in reference to Agnew's prediction that Open Admissions would reap "100,000 devalued diplomas," he has asked, "What does Agnew suggest we do with these children, shoot them?"*

Professor Heller is a City College graduate. His small sharp eyes are quick; he doesn't seem quite to hear when you say that maybe the role of City College has somewhat changed—that, since a brilliant, poor boy such as he himself must have been might today get a full scholarship to Harvard (especially, perhaps, if he were black), the best function for City may now be a new one.

It is no doubt understandable that Heller should feel so

* A third possibility was suggested by Agnew last February. In departing from the prepared text of a speech to 7,000 members of the American Association of School Administrators which outlined the Nixon Administration's proposed career education program to help train and counsel students for jobs in the expanding management and technological fields, he said: "You might say we have the Chinese problem in reverse. In their system, if what you read about mainland China is accurate, there's too much emphasis on pragmatism. Possibly our problem is not enough emphasis on the pragmatic need to teach our young people to take a useful place in society, regardless of whether or not they fit into the framework of higher education." In fact the BHE's Master Plan had originally proposed the creation of fifteen vocational and basic skills centers for high school graduates, to be added to the two (entirely state-financed) that already exist. No one I talked to seemed to know what had happened to this proposal, and, except for Israel Kugler, no one struck me as being especially interested.

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upset. His bright youth is inextricably tied to his conception of City College; it was a time when the curriculum was as rigorous as any in the country. Intellectually elitist, yet "where the children of the rich and poor take their seats together. . . ." Heller loves his college and the change hurts. Unlike those of his colleagues who zip in for a class or two and zip back out to Jersey with their pay checks (among the highest paid in the nation) he's said to be faithfully present even for registration each term.

Another dissident, Prof. Howard Adelson, is the former chairman of the History Department, who has said he's no longer chairman because of his honest attitude toward the new dispensation. According to others, including Vice Chancellor Healy, it's because he was terrible at running a department. A former student who didn't think much of him as a teacher—much too rigid, she says—believes he's representative of some Jews who broke into the American academic establishment during the 1930s. An Orthodox Jew herself, with a professor-husband, she feels that people like Adelson are psychically disturbed to find their now entrenched positions challenged in just the way that they, when they were the Young Turks, successfully threatened and overcame a previous uptight order.

Adelson and Heller insist they're not racist. "Long before it was fashionable, when I was in the Navy, stationed down South," Heller says, "I helped organize boycotts. . . ."

I asked a black man about that. Dr. Charles Baskerville is a geologist, and head of the City College evening session (there's been talk of phasing it out as a separate administration), where impecunious students with enough determination to work all day and then *pay* to attend classes have come to earn degrees at an excruciatingly slow pace. Baskerville, a tall soft-spoken black, says these professors *are* racist. He says this gently, tolerantly, definitely, convincingly; the implication is that they really don't know they are. Baskerville came up the hard way and now lives in suburban White Plains with his wife and children. A product of the evening session himself, he had been tracked into vocational skills at the high school level, but resisted, and fought for a college education. He says he doesn't know why he managed to resist when so many have not, but he's certain that blacks have been tracked. They were seldom encouraged even to take the Regents examination in the old days; now, of course, there's no longer any need to take it. Are his own children tracked? No, since people up in White Plains know he's a dean at City College, thus not *only* a black. But he says that the children of black friends are, that black parents have to be alert and self-assured and sophisticated, if they are actively to prevent their children from being tracked.

Dean Chavarria-Aguilar drops in on Dr. Baskerville to suggest a coffee break. The world-renowned physicist, Robert Marshak, brought Chavarria-Aguilar with him from the University of Rochester when he succeeded Buell Gallagher as president of City College in 1970, at the onset of Open Admissions. Chavarria-Aguilar is breezy, palsy-walsy with Baskerville, who's not a breezy type.

The dean of City College is all for Open Admissions, fed up with the cranky crackpots. He sits down, puts a leg over the chair arm. When I question Open Admissions on the basis of Heller's statement that standards will inevitably go down, he says that "arguing over standards is a 'cop-out.'

"You're talking," he says, "about a traditional set of courses, a traditional curriculum. These 'standards'—all that horse shit—might have been valid before, but not now. If we adhered to them we'd 'turn off' the students."

What about traditional reading and writing skills? Don't they just plain have to be taught, if we're to be at all serious?

"There's a difference," says Chavarria-Aguilar, "between the spoken and written language. And besides that, judgments made in life have nothing necessarily to do with language."

I glance at Baskerville and wonder fleetingly what he is thinking as they rise to go out for coffee.

There are more than 100 basic (formerly called remedial) English sections at City College. In 1964, according to Professor Volpe, then chairman of the English Department, there were only two. Robert Cumming, who graduated from Harvard in the late 1950s, teaches several of these sections. He's of the new breed Volpe has said we must develop in the teaching profession. The soft-spoken son of a white Southern college professor, he does not have a doctorate himself. One feels that, like Ike McCaslin in William Faulkner's *The Bear*, he shoulders the burden of racial blood-guilt for those who stridently refuse it, without a trace of pretentiousness or undercover self-serving. He has generously invited me to sit in on one of his classes, one of a carefully designed sequence of graduated courses in basic English. The incoming student is placed at the levels most nearly coinciding with his competence. Thus he may take only one semester of remedial work; yet he could work his way through as many as five, if, for example, he were a student for whom English is a second language. This relieves a certain traumatizing pressure on the student; at the same time it demands from them patience and endurance to do so much academic work for so little credit (1 to 3 points instead of 3 to 6).

I go into Cumming's classroom. The surroundings are drab, grim, gloomy. This is a terrible nowhere in which to study something. I think of how all through history true pedagogues have been conscious of the question of environment. Can you study in a tenement with the TV on and father beating on mother? Can you *learn?* The Jesuits, the French and Russian and Chinese revolutionary leaders, the ancient Greeks—all have known that environment is a crucial factor in the education of the young. There's an acute space problem at CUNY; in two years the number of gross square feet per student went from 110 to an unhappy 85. This year, according to Kugler, it has dropped to 47, compared with SUNY's 105.

Cumming patiently and gently tries to draw his students out, to make them think about the paper assigned for a month from now. A boy of rather indeterminate skin color and accent, his face fixed in a sweet, eager, bewildered and terrified smile, keeps nodding.

Cumming says that the students do make progress as they work their way along. He doesn't quite understand how it happens, but it does, little by little. He says that

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many of his students went straight through high school without having more than two or three papers assigned! Some of the committed teachers with whom he works are established writers and poets, such as Adrienne Rich and Ann Petrie. The director of the program is Mina Shaughnessy, whose dedication is by now legendary. ("The difference between Mina and myself," says Dr. Vicki Chuckrow, who has been a counterpart in the remedial math program, "is that when a student is doing badly, Mina blames herself. I don't.")

Cumming tries to teach. But there are other ways of getting through the working day. One ordinarily competent language teacher admits that he teaches his SEEK class by rote; he says he feels it's too much to expect that they *understand* what they're memorizing. Another is disgusted, though she's not too articulate about why; a white girl married to a black, she says she started out very idealistically, but now she's in it to get the money, for as long as the gravy train runs. Several teachers in the social sciences tell me they've discovered how utterly foreign the very notion of abstract thinking is to many of the new students. Some say the administration is trying to cover up the dropout rate, which is now running above 40 per cent among Open Admissions. The last fellow I talk to, a lecturer, says that "the whole business is depressing."

Well, *naturally*, I think. What on earth did you expect? We may not even see any great results in our lifetime. I try to imagine what it must have been like after the Russian Revolution, when the leaders were faced with the job of educating millions of serfs who'd never dreamed of learning to read and write. Yet the job was accomplished. It must have been unpleasant work for the essentially bourgeois teachers to aid in their own displacement. And certainly it was not immediately successful; the distinction between "intellectuals of the first generation" and those of the second is taken seriously by Russians. Even if most of our OAP students don't manage to pick up much for themselves, their children's lives may nevertheless be better than they would have been without the present fact of Open Admissions.

However, Israel Kugler's warning that, although Open Admissions is not an impossible dream, it is in real danger of being sabotaged, is anything but frivolous. For one thing, OAP is something of a political football. Since we live in a democratic society we unfortunately can't depend on the kind of radical and steady support we could expect from a revolutionary government fully cognizant of the need for ground-up education and willing to pay for it—to pay and pay. Even during the French Revolution, the major concern of Robespierre and St. Just was the education of the people. We're obliged to work things out in our own topsy-turvy American fashion.

The prospect of working from the sky down rather than from the ground up is one to which people like Chancellor Kibbee and President Marshak are committed. In testifying before a joint legislative committee in Albany concerning this year's budget, Kibbee introduced himself by saying, "The most compelling factor in my decision to accept the chancellorship was Open Admissions. That was so because I count myself among those who view higher education as a mechanism for social change. This perception may be considered radical by some, but it certainly is not new."

The Chancellor of the State University of New York, Dr. Ernest Boyer, was once opposed to such a view, but he now agrees with it. "Ten years ago," he told me, "I argued that alternatives for the promotion of necessary social change should come from outside the university. But these alternatives have not emerged. We cannot, therefore, long continue to preside smugly over the university as a kind of cultural rite." □

SHERIFF'S CRUSADE

HONGISTO OF SAN FRANCISCO

TOM DeVRIES
Mr. DeVries covered San Francisco City Hall for a television station and, as part of his research for this article, spent time in the County Jail.

A year ago, a few days after he was installed in office, the Sheriff of San Francisco was looking for a legal way to refuse to execute evictions, one of his principal responsibilities along with running the county's several big jails. He hated throwing people out of their homes. Perhaps it was coincidence that on a rainy January day when I went back to see how Richard Hongisto was doing after one year in office, he was worrying about legal action again. This time he was planning to sue the Mayor of San Francisco to force him to increase the funds available to operate the jails.

In some ways this represents failure, at least compared to the promise a year ago when Hongisto was swept into office, unseating the fifteen-year incumbent, a hard-drinking Irishman named Matt Carberry. Hongisto was elected as a reformer, a new phenomenon in recent municipal history and certainly the only one in a city dominated politically by Mayor Joseph Alioto and his neo-Daley machine. And being a reformer, a radical by Mayor Alioto's standards, is a tough way to get anything done in San Francisco.

On the day we went to see him, Sheriff Hongisto was paying part of the price for that tough spot. Alioto's office had just released his recommendations on how to spend the city's $26.5 million in revenue-sharing funds. They reached the Sheriff in the middle of a small press conference called to introduce reporters to Hongisto's friend, the other reform Sheriff in America, John Buckley of Cambridge, Mass. [See "Buckley: Sheriff from Middle-

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sex," *The Nation*, January 24, 1972.] Hongisto leafed through the fat budget for the $26.5 million and quite literally turned white. His department had been allocated only $25,000, one-tenth of 1 per cent of the total, a tiny fraction of what went to improve the police department horse stables in the same budget.

"The Mayor," said the Sheriff loudly, "can kiss my ass. He asked me to support him for governor, but I

wouldn't endorse him for dog catcher. He is unfit to hold public office."

Now the reporters generally like Hongisto, and so, particularly after aides begged them, they gave the Sheriff a chance to take his words back. After all, the Mayor still has Hongisto's regular budget for the next fiscal year on his desk for approval. But Hongisto, still angry, stayed with it and even repeated it several times for camera crews as the TV stations heard about the comment. "It's worse than the bombing and murder Nixon is carrying on in Vietnam," he said on one station, "because the people Alioto is hurting are our own citizens right here under our noses."

Sheriff Buckley kept his humor, easy when it's somebody else's problem. He smiled as one camera crew and reporter after another came to ask Hongisto to repeat his statement. Buckley is the only Republican officeholder in Middlesex County, Mass., and presumably no stranger to political cat fights. "I know what you should do," Buckley told Hongisto over dinner. "Make bumper stickers that say 'The Jail Needs Alioto.' "

Few public officials besides Alioto have even seen the inside of one of the four county jails operated by the Sheriff, although in his first months in office Hongisto took dozens of citizens on tours and even participated in a live television program from one of them. He got good publicity, which he enjoys for its own sake and appreciates for its political usefulness. But the publicity didn't help get him much more when it came to budget time: a few extra cents per day per inmate for food but no new employees, no extra clothes, no cooks, no new medical facilities for inmates. It was disappointing.

He was elected on a promise to overhaul the sheriff's department, his constituency being young people, racial minorities, liberals and homosexuals—by and large (except for the liberals) people who are familiar with jails. He spent only $15,000 in a four-way race and got 36 per cent of the vote. If that doesn't sound good, ask Joe Alioto who was re-elected by the same margin in the same election but had to spend half a million dollars to do it.

Hongisto put on his new sheriff's badge with a peace symbol on it in February and continued campaigning, this time unsuccessfully, for the budget increase. Even those who have known him are surprised at his skill in politics. Hongisto always seems more a cop—which he was for ten years—than a politician; more an academic—which he is—than an operator. But he is good at politics, a bit unorthodox but effective.

The Sheriff is sitting at about 11 P.M. in the tiny guard's office of the San Francisco County Jail at San Bruno. A sergeant is asking him about educational incentives (for guards of course): might the county encourage deputies to continue their higher education by offering pay raises for college credit? The Sheriff is receptive, agreeing, telling the sergeant that he has already looked into it and the man is pleased. Outside the office the six tiers of cells loom, dark, and for the time being nearly silent. The Sheriff motions broadly with his arm. "Don't you think we should offer the inmates the same thing?" he asks the sergeant who obviously has not been thinking along those lines. "I mean, maybe we can give a guy some time off his sentence if he gets his high school certificate or at least goes to class every night." The guard agrees, still a bit shocked, and the Sheriff changes the subject to ask about operations of the jail commissary.

We are on tier Five North, home for up to a year to seventy-seven men who are telling the Sheriff about a book shakedown. He has already heard about it, and as we leave he approaches a deputy. "What's this I hear about you confiscating books and burning them?" The deputy is startled and begins to deny it without conviction. The Sheriff tells him, smiling, that he has a witness to the burning and waits. There is a pause, while the Sheriff, a youngish county supervisor, a reporter and two deputies get into the elevator. "How do you think the deputy sheriffs would react to having a book drive for the jail?" Hongisto asks. The book burner's mouth drops open slightly. "It would be great public relations," the Sheriff

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continues. "It would show the community that the deputies really do care about the jail and it would have a good effect on the inmates too." Still no reply and it is clear that the deputy has absolutely no idea what to say. There is another pause; the elevator reaches the basement. "We're gonna have a new rule about books in here: anything I can read and doesn't hurt me ain't gonna hurt no fuckin' inmate. And I ain't read anything that hurt me yet."

More than three years before the next election, the Sheriff is campaigning in a Mission District storefront. He called a meeting of Spanish-speaking people, ostensibly to hear suggestions from the Latin community for operations of his department, but in fact to hustle support for his pending budget request. Present is a group of about three dozen local people and four or five young deputies, including the only two in the department who speak Spanish. Hongisto doesn't wait to be asked before promising that more Latin and Oriental deputies will be hired and agrees easily to taking contributions of previously forbidden Spanish-language books and magazines for the jail library. But he flatly refuses several other ideas. Argument over one of them gets heated and he resists stubbornly: "Listen, I understand what you're asking for but I disagree. If you still feel this strongly in four years you shouldn't vote for me again." Things are soothed somewhat and the Sheriff wanders off to a local bar to drink with the deputies and two acquaintances who had just been released from his jail. "Do you think being sheriff might get me a free drink?" "No, but being with me might," says the ex-inmate.

For all that, he didn't get much extra money and the sheriff's department still gets less than 1 per cent of the city's $600 million budget. It became very clear that even reform machines run on cash and he wasn't getting the cash.

There have, of course, been changes, improvements, in the jails. They are administered better. They're cleaner. There are fewer man-days spent in isolation, fewer restrictions on visiting, better food. Even medical and dental care have improved with volunteer doctors and dentists, but things are still far short of even what state law requires of county jails. And still pending in Federal District Court is the decision on a civil rights suit brought two years ago challenging conditions. Hongisto and his staff frankly hope for an adverse decision in the case, more ammunition in their battle with the Mayor and county supervisors for money.

Relations with deputy sheriffs—nearly all protected by civil service—are better too. Most of them supported other candidates for the office and were alarmed at having a liberal at the top of the department. Hongisto, after all, had visited Cuba just before taking office. Not the kind of thing that reassures the average deputy sheriff.

But Under Sheriff Reuben Greenberg, a black criminologist hired by Hongisto, has delivered raises in retirement and disability pay financed by state funds, and is angling for a 12 per cent pay raise for the deputies. Training programs—the first in the department's history—have also begun, paid for by the state. For the first time in years, Greenberg says, the city has not been sued by an inmate charging brutality in jail.

But without more money, things have probably gone about as far as they can. On the day the Sheriff was getting the bad news about revenue sharing, one of his aides was begging the county supervisors for $280. He wanted to mimeograph a set of jail regulations for distribution to inmates and didn't have enough money to buy paper. He didn't get the money.

Sheriff Buckley of Massachusetts was sympathetic. "We've had more cooperation in my county," he said. As a matter of fact, Middlesex County with twice the population of San Francisco, has one-quarter as many inmates in its jail and a staff twice as large as San Francisco's to handle them. "In five years," Sheriff Buckley said, "I hope to close the jail altogether. I think it's interesting," he said after a visit to San Bruno, "that San Francisco has so many people locked up for minor crimes. I mean, you put people in jail for traffic tickets here! That just doesn't make any sense. And the public is of the opinion that everyone in jail is a Charlie Manson."

Sheriff Hongisto was staring at his desk. His jail population is still going up and he had just signed, he said, an authorization to pay a claim against the city and county for $100,000. It was the out-of-court settlement of a schoolteacher, arrested for drunkenness, who lost his leg from gangrene when he couldn't get medical attention in the jail. It happened long before Hongisto was elected but he is haunted by the idea that it could happen again. He said he thought he would take a bloody stump and put it on the Mayor's desk. "If people in public office think it's more chic to build a new stage at the opera house" (one of the items in the revenue-sharing budget), "then they ought to have to face the prisoners. I'm not going to be still and carry the burden."

Sheriff Buckley was still thinking about the San Francisco County Jail where men frequently sleep on the floor and are sometimes without blankets. "I think half of your prisoners don't have socks," he said, "and I have never seen so many cockroaches in one place." He and Hongisto began talking about appealing directly to citizens for socks.

Hongisto is not, as should be clear, without resources. He has a formidable political base and is particularly adept at getting media attention. Those things have so far been able to get him elected and make him a very well-known figure. It remains to be seen if they will ever get him support from other politicians who find more comfort in trimming budgets than in meeting basic human needs.

Sheriff Buckley took office on April 15, 1970 and was almost immediately knocked silly by a bottle during a riot in Harvard Square. One of his first public comments as sheriff was: "Christ, what a job."

This year he was sitting with his friend the Sheriff of San Francisco in a bar while it poured winter rain outside. "Sheriff's lib," somebody called them. Said Buckley: "See, I'm on the East Coast and Richard here is on the West Coast and between us we're going to squeeze the country." "Yeah," said Sheriff Richard Hongisto. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Solzhenitsyn and the Defeated

NOBEL LECTURE. *By Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Translated by F. D. Reeve. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 69 pp. with Russian text. $4. Paper $1.*

AUGUST 1914. *By Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Translated by Michael Glenny. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 622 pp. $10.*

RAYMOND ROSENTHAL
Mr. Rosenthal is a critic and translator, editor of McLuhan: Pro and Con *(Funk & Wagnalls) and* A Soldier of Humor, and Other Writings *by Wyndham Lewis (Signet).*

Like everything he has written, Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize lecture is direct, simple, ironic and profound. As he makes quite clear, he has great faith in art, much less in man, absolutely none in existing governments, ideologies, the current forms of power, and the fashions which these forms of power set in motion in our world. He is traditional in the oldest sense, a sense that T. S. Eliot, for example, would have hesitated to enunciate; that is, he believes that beauty and truth can form a whole, that the perception of the former can lead to the experience of the latter. "The task of the artist is to sense more keenly than others the harmony of the world, the beauty and outrage of what man has done to it, and poignantly to let people know. In failure as well as in the lower depths—in poverty, in prison, in illness—the consciousness of a stable harmony will never leave him."

A stable harmony? This man not only defies the Soviet overlords but also has no compunction about trampling on *our* most treasured feelings of cultural dereliction, our inalienable modernist heritage of dislocation and despair. But what can we expect of a half-barbarian Russian, who has, moreover, been subjected to material hardships of the worst description; he was bound to seek refuge in some pipe dream. Though we must admit that, like his forebears, Gogol, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, he somehow manages to combine the most precise and practical realism with the most absurd "private" opinions concerning the spiritual life and its meaning for us.

In any event we'll try to overlook this essentially racial peculiarity in his case; that is, we won't deal with it in our evaluations of his literary works, for, when all is said and done, the poor man should have some solace and it wouldn't be exactly sporting—after all he's done for our self-esteem—to bear down on these obviously weak points of his. And anyway, there's nothing really to worry about. Americans, by and large, like the critics who mold their opinions and tastes, are too down to earth, too materialistic, too reasonable, to be led astray by such maunderings. We can even smile indulgently when Solzhenitsyn, clearly a bit addled by his terrible experiences, goes on to say that: "Art warms even an icy and depressed heart, opening it to lofty spiritual experiences. By means of art we are sometimes sent—dimly, briefly—revelations unattainable by reason. Like that little mirror in the fairy tales—look into it, and you'll see not yourself but, for a moment, that which passeth understanding, a realm to which no man can ride or fly. And for which the soul begins to ache. . . ."

I know, I know—it gets worse and worse. Of course art can now and then, by some accident, smuggle through a few "spiritual" experiences, but not the sort of medieval rubbish that seems to be implied by the rest of this quotation. We can thank our stars—or, rather, our cultural and environmental circumstances and our excellent scientific education—that *our* novels don't indulge in such insubstantial fancies but stick closely, obsessively, to one repetitious vision—the vision of our mean, depressed, utterly distraught and ordinary mugs. Fortunately for us, the age of "soul searchers," the age of Melville, Hawthorne and Thoreau is long past and will never, if we can trust our present guides in literature and life, rear its metaphysical head in our midst again.

There is a great deal more in Solzhenitsyn's lecture that would be sure to repel or horrify most up-to-date citizens of our artistic commonwealth, but simple decency and the obligation of maintaining ties with our Russian brothers—especially those who, for whatever far-fetched reasons, have stood up against the Soviet tyranny—can only suggest that we draw a veil of compassion over his other extravagances. One matter, however, cannot be neglected, since it leads straight to his most recent work of fiction, *August 1914,* which in fact is the chief subject of this review. I refer to the faith that Solzhenitsyn seems to have in literature's ability to rectify—at least in the imagination—the mistakes, "the turns and twists of human history." Talk about metaphysics! Here Solzhenitsyn really leaves the ground we all stand on, for he avers that the novelist can not only supplant the historian but can actually give the silences of history a voice unavailable to the most scrupulous of researchers and scholars.

But let me quote: "Woe to the nation whose literature is cut off by the interposition of force. That is not simply a violation of 'freedom of the press'; it is stopping up the nation's heart, carving out the nation's memory. The nation loses its memory; it loses its spiritual unity—and, despite their supposedly common language, fellow countrymen cease to understand each other. . . ." And further on: "Literature transmits condensed and irrefutable human experience in still another priceless way: from generation to generation. It thus becomes the living memory of a nation. What has faded into history it thus keeps warm and preserves in a form that defies distortion and falsehood. Thus literature, together with language, preserves and protects a nation's soul. . . ."

"What has faded into history. . . ." This is quite evidently the motive for the writing of *August 1914.* Far from merely reconstructing the events that produced the calamitous Russian military defeat in Prussia at the beginning of the First World War, Solzhenitsyn is trying to resurrect—there is no other word for it—the men, forces and ideas of that embryonic democratic past which existed in Russia under the Czar in the form of the educated class, the so-called intelligentsia. Defeat in politics can often mean total oblivion for the defeated; they disappear in rancors, factional disputes, exile and death. No one remembers them, no one speaks up for them. But now, just as he spoke up for the silent victims of Stalin's terror and thus rescued a living part of Russia's soul from the darkness, Solzhenitsyn has taken on the much more difficult task of giving life and blood to the ghosts of Russia's swept-away past.

The curious fact about the prerevolutionary Russian intelligentsia was that, in contrast to its Western counterpart, it included all sections of the educated classes, stretching from the near-upper reaches of the army and governmental

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bureaucracy down through the "republic of letters"—scholars, philosophers, writers and poets—to the professional groups, engineers, doctors, teachers and agriculturalists. All of them were united by a common detestation of the Czarist autocracy, and all of them—from liberals in the government to Bolsheviks outside it—looked forward to the day when the autocracy would be modified, limited or overturned and a new age could begin. What bound all these diverse people together as a community, a numerous enclave within the broader Russian society, was much stronger at the outset than what separated them.

It was a unique situation—the situation which, at the start of the First World War, made the cry of "sacred union" a valid one to such rebels as Kropotkin—and Solzhenitsyn has hit upon a unique aesthetic form to body it forth. From his very first pages, where we meet the young Cossack student Sanya, a Tolstoyan who is on his way to enlist in the army to fight against what he regards as the German invaders —the implacable antinomies of intellectual life are ever cruelly present to Solzhenitsyn's thinking characters—and then Roman Tomchak, the rich young landowner who plumes himself on his progressive views, reads Gorki's iconoclastic novels with spiteful relish, reveres Tolstoy because of his attacks on the Orthodox Church, and who, although he has a map of Prussia in his bedroom and each day moves the pins about, directing the maneuvers of an imaginary Russian Army, is himself desperately maneuvering to avoid military service, we hear again and again the voices, the arguments, the concerns and doubts, the hesitations and hypocrisies of this widespread, ramified intellectual community, presented in a kind of choral notation and counterpoint that reminds one more of Jules Romains' *Death of a Nobody* and Giovanni Verga's *House by the Medlar Tree* than anything as densely detailed and circumstantial as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.

But Tolstoy's spirit, if not his aesthetic, hovers over these pages. Indeed, in a book intent on defining the strengths, conflicts and shortcomings of an embryonic, a-borning Russian society, his figure, which embodies the most uncompromising moral beliefs side by side with the bitterest contradictions, stands quite naturally at the novel's portals. So we see him in person, when Sanya, his young disciple, goes to his estate four years before the novel's action properly begins to catch a glimpse of the old man and, miraculously, meets and talks with him. Then again, in the long battle story, Solzhenitsyn makes ironic fun of Tolstoy's fatalistic view of history and his notions about running an army passively. And finally, irony heaped on irony, we meet him one last time, in the despairing conversation of an eccentric scholar in Moscow, who expounds a pessimistic theory of history that could have come word for word from Tolstoy's lips. But, with all that, it is the sardonic irony itself, pervasive in every line of prose, in every character and situation, that puts an unmistakable Tolstoyan stamp on Solzhenitsyn's novel, a stamp clearly visible when held up to the light.

Irony is the natural attitude of a thinking, sensitive man who lives in a society that proclaims its adherence to the ideals of human solidarity, equality and justice, yet degrades and perverts these ideals in its actual practice. Solzhenitsyn's irony, however, is most often both gentle and dialéctical, a kind of search for the way out and for social peace, and so we see him in situation after situation taking care to set before us all of their elements, letting the clashing forces work out their destinies by themselves, as it were.

But irony is also a dangerous weapon, for it is always double-edged and often it is hard to decide which way the author wants it to cut. For example, Isaac Babel, fine artist though he is, often loses us and himself in the coils of his persistent irony. Yet Solzhenitsyn overcomes the inherent traps of his stylistic approach simply because we can feel, instinctively, not necessarily on what side he stands in every confrontation of forces and ideas, but the general direction of his thought. It is obvious that he has no use for high-flown theories about the beneficent logic of historical development, the inevitability of the attainment of social justice, or the gravitational force of economic and social progress—in fact he rejected all these when he set himself in opposition to the present regime in Russia, which has made such theories an integral part of its official mythology.

His standard for social and political judgment is simple: there are those who have a living relation to reality through work or vocation—as Simone Weil said: "Work is a consent to the order inherent in the universe"—and those who live in the unreal world of power, are concerned only with their positions in the power structure, and so, almost automatically, hinder or destroy the efforts of the others. In other words, the bureaucrats on one side and those who must do the job which the bureaucrats, living in their fictive world of paper, orders and careers, inevitably sabotage.

Such fructifying ideas would lie dead on the page if Solzhenitsyn were unable to bring them to life by creating characters that give them convincing embodiment. He does this, and triumphantly, through his two central characters, the real General Samsonov, who, though part of the bureaucracy which stifles Russia, is separated from it by his calling as an officer, and the imagined Colonel Vorotyntsev, one of a group of young officers who feel the breath of a new age and want to direct backward, autocracy-ridden Russia toward it by their energy, courage and self-sacrifice. Both of these men are tragic figures: Samsonov from the start because of the split in his consciousness, his conflicting loyalties; and Vorotyntsev, more cruelly and ironically, because his very desire to work within the bureaucracy and at the same time hold to the truth finally forces him by its inner logic to denounce the generals responsible for the defeat and thus end his military career. Truth has demands that cannot be adapted to even the most rational of political aims.

But the revelation of Solzhenitsyn's

THE REVOLUTION

All worms are one worm!
Their soft links graze

In the patience of the earth,
Soluble and cool.

The white man gropes for something to say,
His bones are landmines and handgrenades.

He says: "Let's talk this over,
I haven't meditated since I was a worm."

He says: "Wait until you see
The pits of their blindness, wait

Until they are helpless,
Those worms!"

Paul Zweig

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novel is Colonel Vorotyntsev. For perhaps the first time in contemporary fiction we meet a character who finds his meaning in what he does, in the intelligence and steadfastness with which he does it. Following his brave, brisk, energetic figure over the battlefield, we suddenly realize how much of modern fiction, enthralled by romantic myths, regards what people do every day, that is, their work (and here too there is irony, for Vorotyntsev's work is the work of war), as the least important part of them, and how much we have been deprived of by this belief. Almost like the brutal onrush of history, which has deprived us of so much, the parallel history of art and literature in our time seems to have taken away our most vital justification for existence as moral beings. We can also see the gulf that separates Solzhenitsyn not only from the bureaucrats and the power-hungry but also from those who believe that literature has only a subjective, not a public value.

One last comment. The chronic malady of every literary community is parochialism, an inability to entertain ideas that don't "fit in." The generally ham-fisted reception of Solzhenitsyn's novel, with its unaccustomed juxtapositions and ironies, its truly revolutionary perspectives—nobody cares about work and vocation any more, except a few outmoded religious thinkers and anarchists—could be a salutary warning, if it were pondered in all its aspects and connections. Why should Solzhenitsyn be freer in his thought than so many of our leading literary and cultural lights? □

Growing Up Puerile

JANET MALCOLM
Mrs. Malcolm is a writer on the staff of The New Yorker.

During this century the horrors of family life have steadily receded. Portnoy's complaint is a far cry from Ernest Pontifex's, and, as things are going, there is reason to wonder whether the next generation of novelists will have anything to say about their childhoods except how agreeable and "ego-strengthening" they were. But the more prescient among them will observe a saving paradox: while children are more kindly and fairly treated today than they probably ever were before, their parents couldn't be more anxious and guilt-ridden if they were flogging them or urging them to eat a little something. Freud's discovery that the child is father to the neurotic has resulted in the elimination of much of the unpleasantness that used to attend infancy and childhood—early toilet training, prohibitions against masturbation, the word "bad" have simply disappeared from middle-class child-rearing practice. At the same time, the pleasures of parenthood, such as they were, have virtually disappeared too. The post-Freudian parent is under strains as trying as any that David Copperfield experienced among the bottles at Murdstone and Grinby's. Heavy is the head with words like "introjection" and "anal sadistic" in it, and the fear that errors of judgment about trifles will lead to serious problems later on dogs parents from cradle to graduate school. Childhood has come to be viewed not so much as a preparation for adulthood as a period of emotional prophylaxis, and the ideal parent-child relationship resembles nothing so much as the relationship between psychotherapist and patient. But unlike patients, children don't go away after fifty minutes and this fact weighs heavily on many parents. The discrepancy between one's knowledge of what is good for a child's development and what one can stand in the way of noise, sloppiness, laziness, destructiveness, grumpiness, etc., is a dilemma faced by every enlightened parent. (The Victorian parent who believed in his innocence that what was least annoying for him was "best" for the child was troubled by no such dilemma.) Books of practical advice on this subject pour from the presses (Dr. Ginott's *Between Parent and Child* is an admirable example of the genre), and lately even courses on "parenting" have come into being.

In the light of all these rigors it is no wonder that many of today's young women's liberationists face their childbearing years with trepidation and want to ship all children off to day-care centers. In the early writings of the movement attempts were made to rationalize the wish for escape from child care with the claim that it was "good for the child" to be separated from his overprotective mother. The present generation of women's liberationists is more honest about its plain disinclination to take on the job of raising children, and, considering how hard the job has become, one can only sympathize with their determination to pass the buck to the state. For not only psychological but sociological influences conspire to rob traditional family life of its satisfactions.

By traditional family life I mean—now that I have read Philippe Aries' book *Centuries of Childhood*—something that is only some 200-odd years old. In this fascinating "social history of family life," Aries points out that the concepts of childhood and family as we now know them are relatively new phenomena. The special provisions that we make for children's schooling and rearing at home, and the special feeling we have about childhood, simply didn't exist until the Renaissance and were not fully absorbed into middle-class life until the 18th century. During the Middle Ages children after the age of 7 entered adult life and, to all intents and purposes, were adults. This was possible because "in the society of old, work did not take up so much time during the day and did not have so much importance in the public mind: it did not have the existential value which we have given it for something like a hundred years. One can scarcely say it had the same meaning. On the other hand, games and amusements extended far beyond the furtive moments we allow them: they formed one of the principal means employed by a society to draw its collective bonds closer, to feel united." The Industrial Revolution brought the fun and games to an end and both children and grownups put away their playthings—the grownups permanently and the children for the duration of their lengthening school hours.

In his study of kibbutz child rearing, *Children of the Dream*, Bruno Bettelheim builds on Aries' findings to suggest that "present problems faced by middle-class parents in raising their children, even much of the malaise, the alienation of Western man, are caused by the growing distance between child and adult." Bettelheim feels that "the life of adults has become so complex, so little accessible to the child, that despite our best efforts to bridge the abyss it continues to grow. It is not that our children have grown much more childish but that we have become so much less so. . . . Given the large amount of time the child now spends with his peer group, and his parents on their own adult pursuits, the time they spend together becomes more problematic." Bettelheim suggests that the kibbutz's deliberate separation of the lives of parents and children represents the direction in which conventional society is unconsciously heading.

Middle-class parents are making valiant attempts to preserve the family. In an article of staggering com-

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placency published in *The New York Times Magazine* in January 1972, William Shannon scolded parents for giving their children expensive presents instead of "values" and held up his own family as an exception to the "widespread parent-failure" which "American children today are suffering from." According to Shannon, "nothing has done more to diminish the strength of the family than the frozen dinner and the American habit of permitting each member of the family to prepare his own meal (more commonly a snack) and eat it at a time of his own choosing." At the Shannons' house, in contrast, "every meal begins with the saying of grace and ends with the children expressing thanks and asking to be excused." Moreover, "on Sunday we eat lunch together in a restaurant and we eat dinner at home by candlelight," and on Saturdays Mr. Shannon does "the baking for the week" in the company of his sons. On a trip to Europe aboard the *France* one of the sons let the family down badly by pelting the waiter with bread, but "all that is in the past. Now in a restaurant only the maître d'hôtel surpasses Christopher in aplomb. Any Sunday now he may be ordering the wine." These revelations of the family's gracious and expensive eating habits follow the author's observation that the saying, "the family that prays together stays together" has a truth behind its slickness and that families ought to find things to do together. The fact that the exemplary Shannon family (where TV is banned—for the children) can find nothing to do together but bake and dine by candlelight gives one pause. It makes one wonder whether the family that prepares disorderly snacks by electricity is all that worse off.

It seems to me that both Bettelheim and Shannon are mistaken in their assessment of the family situation, and that neither the collectivized child rearing of the kibbutz and China and Russia, nor the return to Victorian hypocrisy advocated by Shannon, is likely to take place in this country. While reading Aries' book I was as often struck by the similarities as by the differences between life in the preindustrial age and in our time. As our society has grown more affluent it has grown more puerile. In actuality the distance between adult and child has *stopped* growing. People work less today and are going to work even less in the future. Sports, entertainment and recreation are becoming the foreground of life, and work is receding into the background. Bourgeois values have not so much been repudiated as they have become vestigial in relation to the retirement village that life has become for so many people. And yet parents continue to bring up their children as if they were living in the early days of capitalism, although they themselves have moved on into the instantly gratifying present.

In his article Shannon deplores the "unattractive materialism" of our children, and suggests that children have so many things that they don't attach value to any of them. "A material object which should be cherished at age 16 because it has been earned by odd jobs on Saturdays . . . is nowadays a broken castoff when a child is half that age," Shannon writes. But surely the child who cherishes the toy is the "materialist," while the kid with the roomful of broken castoffs is the one who is capable of a more detached relation to things. I find the cynical attitude of today's children toward the junk they own entirely healthy and heartening.

Where real trouble can be anticipated, where many children are already suffering—is in the area of work. Child labor was a terrible thing, but the feeling of uselessness under which children live today is not so great either. Already in 1913, in his introduction to the play *Misalliance*, George Bernard Shaw expressed concern about the "perpetual holiday" being imposed on children, and speculated about a future in which "if we cannot devise fresh wants as fast as we shorten the process of supplying the old ones, there will come a scarcity of work simultaneously with an excess of leisure. Work may have to be shared out among people who want more of it." That future has arrived. The housewives who flock to consciousness-raising sessions are finding relief not from drudgery but from idleness; housework in any real sense of the term has ceased to exist, as have the household chores that children used to perform. Behind the medieval people's games and festivals were lives stiffened and braced by physical exertion and discomfort. To be fed, clothed, clean and warm required perpetual effort on the part of everyone. Behind *our* amusements and recreations are dishwashers, blenders, vacuum cleaners and the other mechanical servants who do our living for us. And in the official work world, to which increasing numbers of women are naively applying for "fulfil!ment," the same disappearance of work is taking place.

Out of this context the "back to the earth" movement naturally arose. In the grubby Arcadias that proliferated during the late 1960s, bored and troubled middle-class young people tried to feel alive by pretending to be dirt farmers. The pretense rarely survived the first crop failure or quarrel among members, after which the shepherds and shepherdesses packed up and went back to Versailles. Even the communes that survived are pervaded by a feeling of unreality and anachronism. In his book on communes, *Getting Back Together*, Robert Houriet writes, "I had expected to encounter far-out, creative adaptations of modern technology: solar heaters, hydroponic gardens, steam-powered tractors—in short the synergistics Fuller foretold. Instead I walked into communes that looked like antique shops." Elsewhere in the book Houriet recounts how he and a few members of a commune in New Mexico, where drab organic food was the fare at all meals, sneaked off to a grocery store and had an orgy of Snicker bars, ice cream, salami and cheese sandwiches and boxes of cookies called Zu-Zus. "After weeks of dietary celibacy we fell lustily from grace, the all-American Zu-Zu way. God, it was great," Houriet happily recalls, and adds: "It was not long ago that we were all guileless suburban children of the Pepsi generation, who ran Pavlov-like to the tinkle of the Mister Frostee bell. It takes us some time to break the cord." But it wasn't so much the Pavlovian cord as the *lack* of junk food that made Houriet and his friends salivate at the thought of sodium nitrate and bleached white flour. No child of my acquaintance would cross the street for Mr. Softee (as Mr. Frostee is known in these parts), let alone run to the tinkle of his bell. Suburban kids are haunting the health stores along with their parents, and turning their noses up at "sprayed food" and homogenized peanut butter.

The poor continue to enjoy the gooky confections and white bread that the affluent have abjured—and the poor continue to exist in vast numbers. The fact that millions of people in this country (not to speak of those in the underdeveloped countries) are living in true material misery makes a mockery of the efforts of the affluent to, as it were, live down their good fortune. The work of redistributing the wealth could—indeed should—fill the troublesome leisure time of the affluent and that of their children. But as things stand, this recreation—citizenship—is not apt to compete for adherents with Disneyland and the snowmobile. The most well-meaning among us are hard put to know what actually to *do* to contribute to the common good. We are like children who want to be useful, but have been told too many times that they are not "big enough." This feeling of helplessness plagues adults and children alike and lies like a guilty secret between them. It would be nice to think that, as they sit around languidly breaking their Creative Playthings, our children are preparing a way for themselves out of the cocoon that imprisons us all. □

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Fulfillment and Control

THE TROUBLE WITH FRANCIS: An Autobiography. *By Robert Francis. University of Massachusetts Press. 276 pp. $7.50.*

MICHAEL HAMBURGER
Mr. Hamburger is a poet, critic and translator of German poetry. His most recent book is the bilingual anthology, East German Poetry *(Dutton).*

Poets who feel the need to write autobiographies or memoirs, and many do, come up against a tangle of difficulties. One is inherent in this kind of writing. Autobiography is not a form or a genre. It has no rules, conventions or precedents other than those imposed by libel laws. One can begin at the beginning, as far as chronology goes—and chronology doesn't go far enough—but one can't end at the end. As for the middle, it's the worst stretch of all, the hardest to get into perspective, make sense of, keep interesting and alive. The usual way out is some sort of faking, a resort to semi-fiction, dramatizing or mythologizing of one's outer life. Public men can stuff the thing with public documents revealing as much as they choose to reveal of what they did or failed to do in a particular situation. Most poets, if they are honest, know that the public side of their lives has little to do with the activity that distinguishes them, the writing of poems; and what little they know about that they usually like to keep to themselves. So they are left with the material of which anyone's life is mainly made up—and literary reminiscences, gossip, talking shop.

Robert Francis was so little talked and written about, at least in England, that I might never have got to know his poetry if I hadn't been taken to see him during my first short visit to America in 1965; and to meet Robert Francis once, in his own setting, was an experience as distinct and unforgettable as to read his autobiography. It was to get a sense of the totality of his life and work, for everything about him and around him was of his own choosing, his own making. Another happy chance brought me to the Connecticut valley for a longer stay in the following year. The autobiography adds a wealth of significant details to the acquaintance, but my first impression of the man and the poems is unchanged. The book is as unassuming, as clear-cut and as extraordinary as the person. For one thing, it doesn't fake, dramatize, mythologize or indulge in "poetic" prose, that vulgar evasion of the true business of autobiography. For another, it can afford to do without those accretions, because, in his unique way, Robert Francis succeeded in combining "perfection of the work" with "perfection of the life." Though a professional writer for most of his adult life, he became expert in the art of making a little go a long way, keeping out of what didn't concern him, cultivating his garden—even while circumstances forced him to work in other people's. His life, as he writes, has been one of "fulfillment and control."

With the exception of Robert Frost, who was a friend and mentor, hardly one famous writer makes a major appearance in the book—for the simple and adequate reason that none played a major part in Robert Francis' life. The only shocking confession in his book, as he points out himself, is what he calls his dislike of poetry: "Much of it I detest. Yet over the years I have had to pretend, more or less, that what was giving me pain was giving me pleasure. . . . No wonder I have been reluctant to admit that the thing I have devoted my life to is a thing I usually want to flee from. . . . Why couldn't I think of a single poet I had any particular desire to meet? There is more than one answer to that question, but perhaps it is enough to say that to visit a poet is to put oneself at the mercy both of his poetry and of himself." It takes a poet as truthful, and as roguish, as Robert Francis to admit that the urge to write one's own poems doesn't necessarily make one receptive to other people's, because one monomania—and to devote one's life to writing poetry is monomania—excludes another. The admission leaves Robert Francis free to concentrate on the real substance of his life, his discovery and practice of the virtue of frugality. This is what makes his book exemplary at a time when it is becoming clear that this earth can be ravaged and made uninhabitable by the exploitation and waste of its resources in the production race. Frugality means both economy and fruitfulness. By providing statistics of his income and expenditure, of the plants he grows and eats, of the things he buys and does not buy, Robert Francis shows how frugality can work in practice on the East Coast of the United States in 1970; and how its practice can lead to happiness, "fulfillment and control." His book ought to be read for that alone, and read by persons who have never come across a line of his poetry. They should read his poems, too, if they de-

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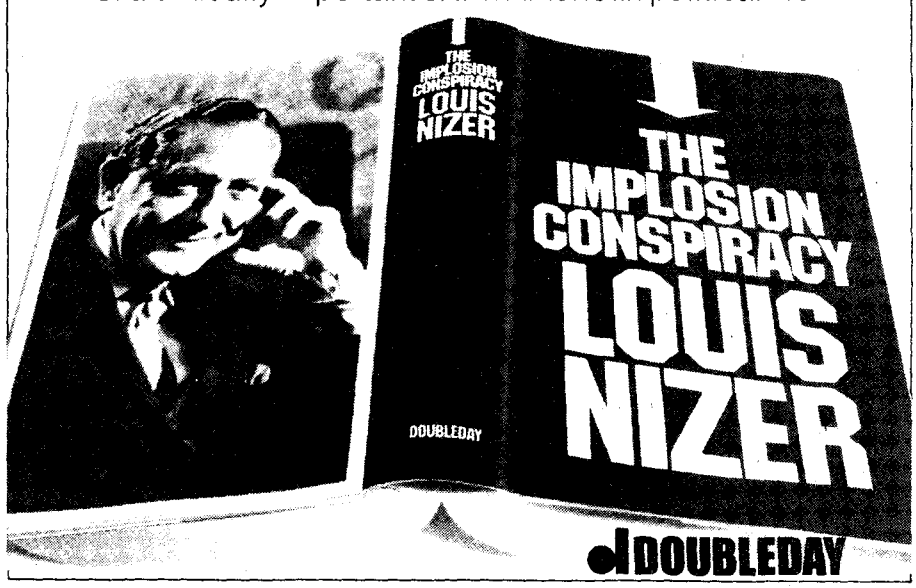

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test poetry less than he does, but the book is so far from being a "literary autobiography" in terms either of shop or self-analysis that its importance doesn't depend in the least on the importance accorded Robert Francis as a poet.

Not that Francis is a hot gospeler of frugality, or of any of the other virtues his autobiography embodies. As the ironic title announces—it is a quotation from a review of one of his books of poems—his sense of humor is as evident in the autobiography as his seriousness and his single-mindedness. His book would be less persuasive if he had set out to convert others, instead of telling the story of how a timid and conventional man, the son of a Baptist minister, found his own way of life, his own way of being happy and his own view of the world—a pessimistic and agnostic one, Francis confesses, because of his deep concern with the sufferings of others and his awareness that suffering is inescapable. That it took him until late middle age to discover that he was homosexual suggests what obstacles Francis had to overcome in his quest of personal happiness; and though the good life he has made for himself demands more solitude than most people are able to bear, his book is full of shrewd and sympathetic responses to relatives, neighbors and casual acquaintances whose occupations and needs were quite different from his.

Not the least distinction of *The Trouble with Francis* has to do with control as much as with fulfillment. Coolness is a word that has been very fashionable in professedly anti-conformist circles, but most of the writing produced and consumed by them has been chaotic, incoherent and hysterical. Both in his poems and his autobiography Robert Francis has kept cool; not out of indifference or apathy, but a true serenity and balance attained by hard work, on his own terms. It is refreshing to read a book by a man who pities others more than he pities himself, who can get on with his work unstimulated by vanity, greed or competition, and who has learnt to find richness in what most people would call poverty. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

I saw three plays last week: one safe, sane, cozy; the other two dolorous, crude, at times exasperating. Without being more masochistic than is good for one, I preferred the more arduous experiences.

William Douglas Home, who has for years been feeding London's West End stage with mild *apéritifs*, has now contributed another which we have imported: *The Jockey Club Stakes* (Cort Theatre). Home knows his trade. His writing is urbane, the tone casually teasing without asperity. He makes pleasant company for well-settled people.

This new addition to his work presents certain members of the English aristocracy as charming codgers who, though not quite honest, are gentlemen. They know how to accommodate moral dilemmas to their convenience. Their cynicism is "humane." In this case, they are devoted to betting on the races. Their motto is: please do not disturb!

Wilfrid Hyde-White, who has acted in such plays and roles of the same caliber (*The Marquis of Candover*) for some fifty years, is altogether expert in them. He combines a pretended obtuseness with a secure shrewdness that is the cream of the jest. Robert Coote as a sort of Colonel Blimp is also quite amusing, with an added touch of caricatural comedy. The American actors in the cast are proficient too, which is true of the lot. My trouble with such plays is that I don't give a damn about any of their people—or at least in this kind of representation of them.

At the small Public Theatre Annex, Dennis Reardon's *Siamese Connections* is being given a chance. Reardon is, I presume, a youngish playwright whose *The Happiness Cage* was produced several years back, in one of the larger halls of Joseph Papp's Public Theatre. The earlier play was more arresting: it contained a number of striking scenes. The new and more difficult play reveals other aspects of the author's promise, though it all but destroys itself by being overwritten and overextended.

It deals with a contemporary family of impoverished farmers in what I take to be the Middle West. (Being city-bred, I had supposed such wretched farms and farmers as the play represents no longer exist, but I must be mistaken.) Still, the time and locale are not crucial to the drama's theme. In this play a family is tied together by hate, the permanence of its lacerating frustrations. Hardly anyone is able to acknowledge the source of his or her dissatisfaction; to be sure, there is from time to time a turbulent moment of self-recognition, but then no one knows how to act upon it.

The bad seed springs from the junior son, unprepossessing in appearance and less regarded than his more attractive, thick-headed brother. The maniacal sibling envy is aggravated by the accidental death in Vietnam of the better-looking, more docile boy, who has acquired a fake heroic stature. But the sinister estrangement which exists among all these folk binds them together as much as love might do. It gives them roots! The malevolent surviving brother, who wants both to take over his father's farm and to escape it, ends by replacing him in working the hopelessly ungrateful land on which they have all lived and suffered so long.

There are odd insights strewn through the text. For example: the younger brother takes up with the older brother's girl friend, whom he treats cruelly. When she is asked why she clings to the rascal, though he has not married her, she says, "Out of curiosity": she has never before encountered such a creature. There is a measure of intuitive veracity in the play which kept one watching it, though the shifts from old-fashioned "peasant realism" to scenes of contacts and conversations between the living and the dead, and the dead among themselves, finally become wearisome and very nearly ridiculous. But there would be little truth in saying, "There's nothing to it." Though he has still much to learn, Reardon is not without talent.

Apart from the grotesque notion of casting a man as the grandmother of the household, all the others (notably Roberts Blossom, Cathryn Damon, James Staley) acquit themselves well in by no means simple tasks.

One commits a critical injustice with such productions as that of *Siamese Connections* if one fails to recognize the inadequate means and conditions under which they are done. They must perforce remain unfinished pieces of work. This applies as well to *A Recent Killing* by LeRoi Jones (who now calls himself Imamu Amiri Baraka). The Jones play is uncouth in texture and performance, but it is nonetheless a play of considerable scope, power and, despite its harshness, sensibility. (New Federal Theatre; 240 East 3rd Street.)

It seethes with passionate anger, with bursts of wild humor, with a consuming desire for expression. It explodes all over the place and, as usual with such hectic efforts, there is a quantity of debris—some of it ugly. But ugliness may also serve art's purposes: what is more important in this case is that the play teems with life.

It would seem, in a first reaction, that *A Recent Killing* has no center, no focus. It is self-deceptive to think so. What gives the play unity is Lennie Pearson, a soldier in the Strategic Air Command Base on a Caribbean island in the mid-1950s. (The play was written in 1964.) Lennie reads poetry, and hankers to be-

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come a poet. Now he scribbles bits of verse which are only the signs of inarticulate impulses. But if he is not yet a poet, we see that he is a feeling, thinking, essentially gentle, warm-hearted person. When a friendly sergeant asks about poetry, "What is it for?" Lennie's sufficient answer is, "What's anything for?"

Like the others in Lennie's room—another black and a New York Jew—he is harassed and bullied by the white officers—all pretty poor specimens, the worst being a "cracker" who is hardly easier on the Jewish boy than on the blacks. Lennie dreams of beautiful women, masturbates, horses around with the others, gets drunk. He also has visions of Nijinsky, Joyce's Leopold Bloom, and a spectral homosexual aesthete. Each has a different message for him—particularly the last, who urges him on in the quest for beauty and to the pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh. What these visions reveal is that while still a "mixed-up" kid, Lennie is in search of meaning for himself, a destiny.

We witness the life of the barracks and the stockades (including their latrines): the squalor, the callousness, the rancid sexuality, the stultifying military regimen. There is a tough-as-nails general who is inwardly a puling baby. The "cracker" lieutenant fornicates with the black sergeant's wife, who finally cuts her despicable lover's throat.

Lennie is imprisoned for running away from his post as a guard when a group of Puerto Rican independence desperadoes begin to shoot it out with the Americans in a successful attempt to blow up one of the U.S. planes on the ground. Lennie's two buddies drunkenly undertake to spring him from the stockade. The brave though hopeless attempt misfires and Lennie's two pals are killed just at the moment he has persuaded them that their act is futile. Lennie now realizes that his "dreams" are over and the time for confronting reality has come; he awaits the onrush of his captors with gun in hand. The poet has become a fighter.

Most of the twenty-five scenes in this long play depict the world which creates the inevitability of its conclusion. Obviously cutting is required and loose ends should be tied up, and there are other things which may be argued against the play. Still, the faults are less significant than that the play is an American drama wrought from the bitter blood struggle of a man who can write, and writes not only about himself and his race but about the immediate environment in which we all dwell.

I found Gary Bolling, in a cast composed of Equity and non-Equity actors, convincing and sympathetic in every phase of his role. Mba Acaz as the cuckolded sergeant, and Carl Willis Crudup as T. T. Jackson, the most scatterbrained of Lennie's companions, lend authentic vigor and at times even a sense of fun to the violence. In fact, the entire cast is loyal in their endeavor to fulfill the writer's and director Irving Vincent's demanding designs. □

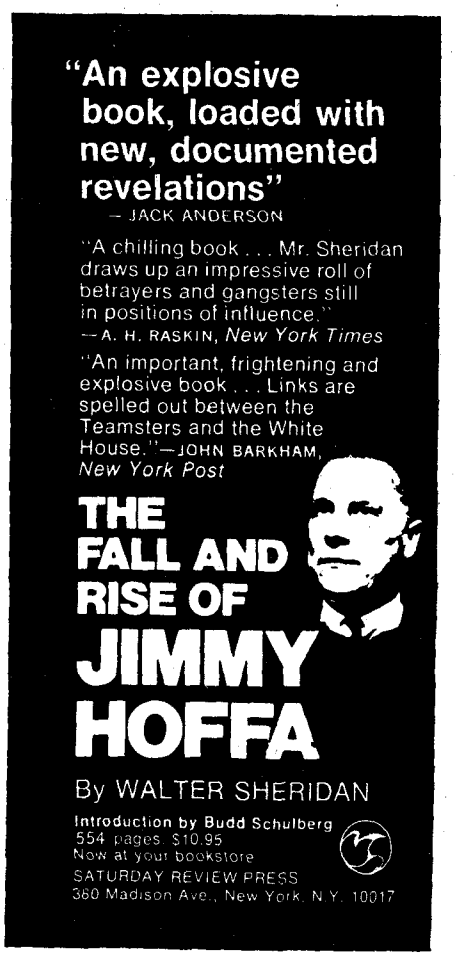
MUSIC

DAVID HAMILTON

A formidable lot of talk is going on these days at ostensibly musical occasions. I am not referring to audience murmuring; that remains pretty close to traditional levels. Rather, the current babel emanates from the stage, usually in the form of audible program notes delivered by the conductor. Within a period of eight days in January, one could hear Thomas Scherman lecturing about Berg and Webern at Town Hall; Pierre Boulez, Paul Jacobs and William Bolcom "encountering" new music at NYU; Boulez again, giving a public "master class" for student composers at Juilliard; and Michael Tilson Thomas introducing a Boston Symphony "Spectrum" concert at Carnegie Hall. (The following week, the indefatigable Boulez offered an "informal evening" devoted to Webern's Op. 5 at the Juilliard Theatre, but I was next door hearing the première of Elliott Carter's Third String Quartet. I shall write of that extraordinary experience in my next column, but let me at least alert out-of-town readers to further performances of it, by the Juilliard Quartet: February 16 in Cambridge, Mass.; April 26 and 27 in Washington; May 2 in Williamstown, Mass., and May 3 in Amherst.)

Each of the *compère*-conductors espouses a different style, from Thomas' polysyllabic boyish earnestness to Scherman's script-bound stiffness. The latter's forum was a series under the sponsorship of New York University, entitled "Masterpieces of the Moderns Unmasked"—a slogan inviting waggish variants that unfortunately proved all too justified. Except for the work of the soloists (Nadia Koutzen and Richard Goode in the Berg *Chamber Concerto*, Bethany Beardslee in Webern's *Geistliche Gesänge*, Op. 15), the performances were scrappy, shapeless and often downright incompetent. Certainly the worst disasters that can befall a new or little-known work are in the realm of performance, compounding unfamiliarity with apparent incoherence, but Mr. Scherman's verbal presentations were very nearly as deadly as his executive ministrations. I don't mean the factual inaccuracies (though the note-taking students in the audience will not thank him for those when their papers are graded), but the fatal impression that "this modern stuff" is so complex and involuted that apparently even a professional musician of mature years cannot discourse clearly about it without his eyes glued to a script—and not always clearly even then. Mr. Scherman looked uncomfortable, seemed to be unfamiliar with his material, and thus communicated only counterproductive responses. His intentions are obviously of the best, but there is a proverb about roads so paved.

The size of the audiences Boulez draws whenever he talks about music suggests a desire by the public to know "what to listen for" in modern music. As a means of imparting straightforward factual and historical information, speeches from the podium are obviously inferior to competently prepared printed program notes; on the other hand, live rather than printed music examples are surely a more direct way to communicate the substance and process of musical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discourse. Scherman used such examples, but some of them at a level of such abstraction from the actual sounds of the Berg as to be virtually useless, indeed confounding; others, such as Berg's little word games, should never be presented to a nonprofessional audience hearing the work for the first time, for their significance is primarily biographical—they are things "not to listen for," in fact (Boulez made, I feel, the same error with the same piece last year at one of his "informal" evenings). There are potential virtues in lecture-concerts, but I have heard very few prepared and presented in a way that communicated both useful knowledge and enthusiasm; the closest have been the portions of the Philharmonic "Encounters" involving Paul Jacobs, the orchestra's pianist, who—perhaps because he is also a professional classroom teacher—manages both.

Boulez's shortcomings in this role I have discussed at some length elsewhere (*Musical Newsletter*, October 1972). It is easy for a man of such formidable intellect and verbal fluency to assume the same qualities in others—not only in other composers and conductors but also in his audiences, who clearly often do not know how to frame the questions that genuinely concern and disturb them about modern music. Furthermore, his own intellectual context is very different from ours, as I was forcibly reminded in the "master class" during the discussion of a brass quintet written in an idiom familiar to many Americans who have passed through school, college or conservatory educations (the composer named Persichetti and Schuman as influences); this is a stratum of American musical life, a context, that a visiting European can hardly be in a position to grasp.

Such public "master classes" for composers seem a dubious enterprise at best. I did not attend the now notorious first session, where Boulez is said to have intellectually manhandled the students in a way that several of my colleagues found distasteful. At the second one, he insisted that aggressive discourse was necessary in the teaching of composition, but he was thereafter in fact very gentle, and dealt primarily in generalities. Whether conducted with kid gloves or brass knuckles, however, this sort of occasion puts on the student composer, already faced with a superstar celebrity of known ferocity, the additional burden of defending himself verbally before an audience—not normally considered a prerequisite for quality composition (although, if present trends continue, it may be so regarded). It is different with singers or players, of course, for acquiring poise in public is a necessary part of their education, and public classes for them may indeed be justifiable.

In Boulez's "master class," too, I missed what I would most like to have heard from him: a close musical criticism of the student works; instead, we heard mostly vague discussions about the relative importance of "technique" and "inspiration." In truth, he didn't seem to be terribly interested in what he was doing, except at the end, when a couple of Maoist culture critics made speeches from the audience (that, doubtless, is an experience for which the European context prepares you better than the American!). Boulez is not a man who can dissemble about enthusiasm; when he doesn't have it, you can hear that he doesn't, in his conducting as in his speaking: to take some examples from this year's Philharmonic concerts, not for Bach (dismal, underrehearsed performances of the Fifth *Brandenburg Concerto* and Cantata No. 48); not for Mozart (an eventless reading of movements from the "Posthorn" Serenade); sometimes for Haydn (but mostly for the sonorities, rather than for the phraseology, wherein reside the essential wit and genius of this composer); usually for Stravinsky. Philharmonic concerts are certainly more interesting than they used to be; there's nearly always something remarkable to be heard—but I wish there wasn't so much audible evidence, in the form of underpreparation, showing which works aren't this conductor's cup of tea.

Michael Tilson Thomas, on the other hand, can hardly be said not to convey enthusiasm when he talks. He bubbles, he waxes autobiographical, he sprays around Robert-Craftian polysyllables and then sends himself up for being pompous. The "Spectrum" concerts in Boston are concerts with a gimmick: in the case of the one brought to New York, to demonstrate the musical possibilities of multiple and antiphonal sonorities. The first half of the program did this well, with examples by Johann Christian Bach, Giovanni Gabrieli and Bartók (the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*). In the last of these, particularly, one felt that the "idea" of the concert had a salutary effect on the performance, for I have never heard the antiphonal effects brought out so clearly, even on stereo recordings. (In this connection—and there probably was a connection—I was happy to observe that in his performance of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony the previous evening at Philharmonic Hall, Thomas reinstated the once, but no longer, standard seating of second violins at his right, opposite the firsts, with distinct advantages in textural clarity. And at another Carnegie Hall concert, he arranged the ensemble in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* for maximum clarity, as well as obtaining remarkable precision without sacrificing verve and bounce.)

The commentary here was limited to standard program-note stuff, delivered informally and occasionally interlarded with unexplained technical or historical terms (does the average New York concertgoer know what the "Mannheim school" signifies?), but there was no dissection, no illustration. The listener's attention was focused on a single aspect of these pieces, but at least it was a substantial one. After the interval, things got rather muddled, what with audience ructions engendered by an interminable piece by Steve Reich; the piano cult was waiting to hear six soloists in *Hexameron*, a fairly trivial set of variations by Liszt and others. Reich expends the listener's time much more prodigally than he does any compositional resource; his *Four Organs* is one of those pieces that can be described much more quickly than they can be played (the reverse relation obtains with most art music, and with a good deal of popular music as well), but even so I won't describe it, since public standards for evaluating trances are as yet minimal, and my negative judgment need not stand for much. To return peripherally to my original topic, what the behavior of the audience during Reich's piece *did* demonstrate was the abysmal state of public manners today. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The trouble with Jeanne is that she ness is only as thick as a scab. For all his beaten face, boxer's walk, gutter talk and list of *macho* jobs as long as a master sergeant's sleeve of hash marks, he is a man who approaches his wife's bier with revilements and degrading epithets on his lips, and in three minutes has sunk his streaming face into the bordering flowers, a little boy asking forgiveness of his lost mother. Paul is a moral cop-out, an emotional adolescent; in short, he is the great American slob, and in the end that gets him killed.

The trouble with Jeanne is that she is a narcissist with a penchant for being raped. She is mod arrogant and as dependent as a kitten, street-wise, quick-witted, ignorant, and daddy's little girl

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with an instinct for bourgeois amenities. In the end, she is left with a gun in her hand, reciting to herself: "I don't know his name . . . he followed me in from the street . . . he tried to rape me; I don't know his name, he followed me in from. . . ." In truth, she didn't know his name.

Thus Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider in Bernardo Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris*, from a story by Mr. Bertolucci. As stories go, I would call it standard Continental film export. A man at the end of his rope meets up with a restless girl under ambiguous circumstances, and together they enter a zone of magic isolation. They exchange endearments and some home truths; they comfort each other; it looks for a time as though they might have found each other. But, no; he has spent all his courage and she has not yet earned much wisdom. So the idyll cracks, and we all go home exclaiming how sensitively these Europeans catch the most poignant nuances of small inner lives. We have been so exclaiming for years, but in this case there is more to it than that, of course, or *Last Tango in Paris* would not have swept into New York on the greatest media wave in convenient memory, or be playing at $5 on a reserved seat basis. But more about this in a moment. First some circumstances.

Jeanne is apartment hunting. Presumably, she will soon marry Tom (Jean-Pierre Leaud), a self-designated film director who is now making a documentary of her busy Parisian life and memories of childhood. Assault by camera gratifies Jeanne and Tom is infatuated by what he sees framed between his thumbs and forefingers. It might work out—just possibly. But Paul too is looking for a place. His wife has just cut her throat in a bathtub of the hotel she had taken over from her parents and ran, with Paul's sardonic help, seemingly as a house of convenience for her rather varied tastes.

Paul and Jeanne meet in a cavernous, peeling, incredibly remote flat in the middle of Paris, where Paul, noting that the young lady, though evidently nervous, does not depart, suddenly pulls down her pants and couples with her in the standing position favored by Indian temple sculptors.

Paul, unnerved by his wife's self-destruction, and by it led to mistrust all nongenital communication between the sexes (also because it gives him considerable freedom of action), forbids an exchange of names, or indeed of any identifying particulars. That is catnip to a girl who wants above almost anything to talk about herself.

As one would expect, Paul is not con-

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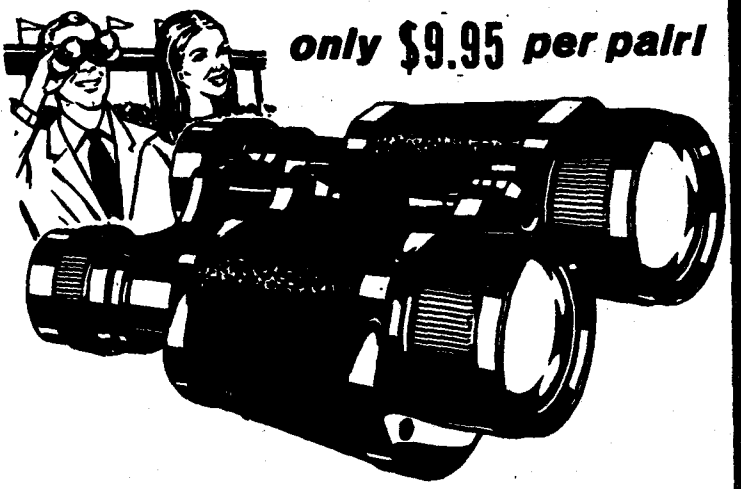

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sistently tacit. He volunteers one long monologue about his brute of a drunken father and poet of a drunken mother; about milking cows and the look of American fields in favorable light and of a humiliation in the presence of a youthful sweetheart. Jeanne laughs at this breach of his regulations and he intimates the whole matter was invented. Perhaps so; it reveals enough in any case.

But aside from that, Paul's conversation is mostly a string of anal metaphors; he also terrorizes Jeanne with a dead rat, but adding scatalogical suggestions of a sort that do not come readily from boys of rat-toting age.

Because of Paul's anal quirk, we are treated to some very explicit variations on intercourse that affect me much as would the sight of someone eating spaghetti with a hairbrush. That is, I like the dish, but find the method of consuming it alienating. I can't speak for others. Jeanne's preoccupations are masturbatory—even, I fear, when she is copulating. There are also several gratifyingly leisurely shots of Ms. Schneider in the nude; her body is every bit as fresh and voluptuous as her clothed figure had led me to believe.

Is this pornography? It certainly is not "hard porn," as the popular education of the past several months have taught us to discriminate, for genitalia are never shown in conjunction, or indeed at all. There is no way to be sure that Brando and Schneider, as opposed to Paul and Jeanne, are really "doing it"—the ultimate criterion. In fact, I would not call it pornography at all, because that genre always betrays itself by a clammy objectivity, the voyeur's lonely lust; whereas Bertolucci's concern for his characters is manifestly much warmer and much more humane than mere preoccupation with their physical exploits.

The fact remains that what informs me about Paul and Jeanne, and what draws me to them, occurs almost exclusively in the halves of their lives that are recorded outside that apartment. And inside it, what they say, rather than what they do, instructs me. And yet the erotic scenes run away with the story, the way tobasco runs away with a sauce. If directors are to profit from the sudden new permissiveness they will have to learn moderation. Sex is not "just another" aspect of life; it is an aspect which, in rational conduct, is invariably private; therefore, when it is made public, the impact is disproportionate. The risk is that the information, rather than enriching the characterizations, can easily make clinical oddities of them. Nor do I think the situation will change basically as we become habituated to erotic permissiveness. It will still be true that only in fiction do we know people by their conduct in bed, and the more probable result will be a striving for new sensationalism as the novelty wears off. I would not accuse Bertolucci of intending to exploit sex, but the uproar occasioned by this slight picture suggests that sex is indeed being exploited. It is also a little depressing; Bertolucci is so talented that he could make *The Conformist*; now he is conforming to the latest yo-yo craze.

As for Brando, he begins to remind me of Jean Gabin in his later years (though Brando is not yet 50). The power is still there, and the old cat knows every trick of the trainer's whip as he runs the routine of the gaudy barrels. But somehow the danger is gone; he is no longer really that much interested. Brando will be exciting as long as he can move (and that will be for some time yet), but now I cannot be sure how much he is doing and how much recalling.

Maria Schneider is marvelously convincing in her mannerisms and reactions, but she is no match for Brando when it comes to "giving away" information. Thus, though she tells more, she conveys less and leaves something of a blank in the design.

Bertolucci directs with a clarity and economy that are a relief after the elliptical rhetoric of *The Spider's Stratagem*. His interiors are superbly evocative, but Paris outdoors is authentic to a fault. It looks like those accordion packs of postcard views you can buy in the shops under Notre Dame, and probably for the same reason—the shots are composed to show off the city, not to get into it.

The title scene is a seedy little tango contest in a run-down dance hall (actually, the Salle Wagram, according to the program notes). Paul and Jeanne have their disastrous next-to-last meeting there, and the production effort seemed to me foolishly elaborate—all those grim incompetents tangoing their manikin hearts out. Perhaps there is alleged to be some connection with the gyrations of Paul and Jeanne, but I don't feel it or think it necessary. I put the episode down to Bertolucci's weakness for picturesque cinema. In the final scene, the gun goes off and then the camera lifts to show rooftops à la René Clair. I'm sure that was too easy a pretty idea.

So that was the trouble with Paul and Jeanne. Their little story is very well told; I doubt that it is important or will be remembered after the shock subsides. But the picture certainly advances the new freedom another step, and we must get on with that, if only to get over it. □

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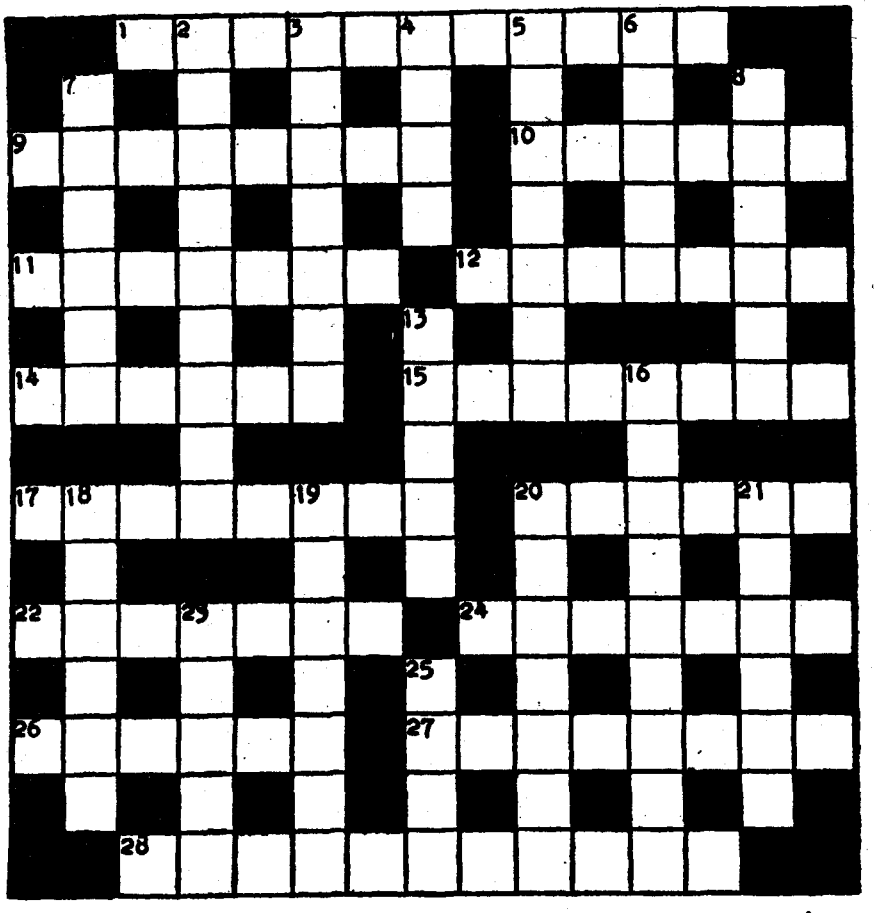
Crossword Puzzle No. 1476

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 See 8 down
9 Putting one's foot down on what 10 might need? (8)
10 A character, possibly one that is permissive. (6)
11 See 25 down
12 Back up about what might be several feet. (7)
14 Point uncovered when twisted. (6)
15 Goes on the stage, but not for the first time. (8)
17 Fix responsibility, having perhaps cried when caught in the act. (8)
20 Dwell for some time on one point. (6)
22 and 13 down Shield to hold forth when Cromwell ruled. (12)
24 Take on a second mate. (7)
26 Might border on a criminal act. (6)
27 Ailing, or in poor condition, as a novel description. (8)
28 Like a good Greek scholar, he will shortly find it's nice to be shaken afterwards. (11)

DOWN

2 The old-fashioned girl might aspire to be suggestive of Guest's "heap o' living." (9)
3 Didn't quite get home without stopping, but the journey came first. (7)
4 If they get hot, one might be taken in the station, being likely to hold hot stuff. (4)
5 Credit. (7)
6 See 25 down
7 Latin's not what he habitually spoke—just a sort of it. (6)
8 and 1 across The old record, perhaps, of positive parenthood. (3,3,5,2,4)
13 See 22 across
16 He directed an opera before getting in wrong a couple of times. (9)
18 Relating to some joint where you could find a motor companion. (6)
19 Mistakenly claimed to be a system, or at least a point of it. (7)
20 Pacific theology. (7)
21 See 25 down
23 Lake covering most of Utah, making a circle to the east. (5)
25, 6, 11 and 21 Older than 8 and 1, implies one finds a comforter with flower-power. (4,2,3,3,4-6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1475

ACROSS: 1 and 10 Wine, Women and Song; 9 Litotes; 11 Zoo; 12 Hoaxed; 13 and 25 Restart; 18 Ossify; 20 Redheads; 23 and 6 across Soulmates; 24 Used up; 28 Ditched; 30 Strut; 31 Yearlings. DOWN: 1 Waltz; 2 Nitrous; 3 Witchcraft; 4 Massacre; 5 Nearer; 6 and 29 Made to order; 7 Thoreau; 8 Sightless; 14 On the prowl; 15 Ironsides; 17 Vendetta; 19 Saunter; 21 Abandon; 26 Terms; 27, 15 across, 22 and 16 What is so rare as a day in June?

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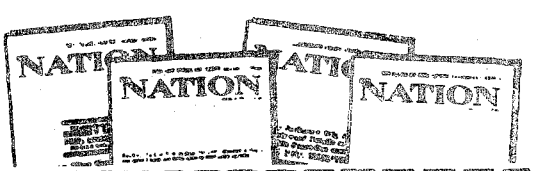

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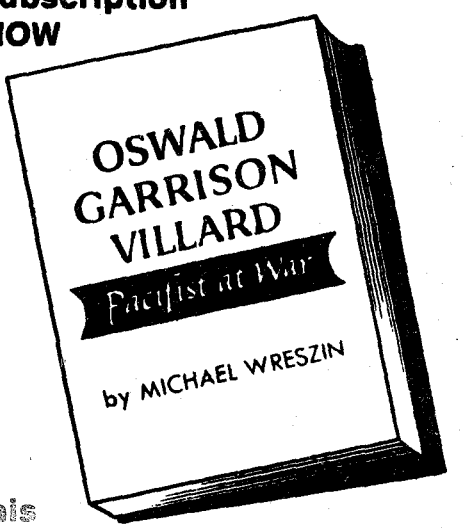

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